

# Cheltenham Borough Council Council

**Meeting date:** 13 October 2025

**Meeting time:** 2.30 pm

**Meeting venue:** Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

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## **Membership:**

Councillors Dr David Willingham (Chair), Martin Horwood (Vice-Chair), Frank Allen, Glenn Andrews, Victoria Atherstone, Paul Baker, Adrian Bamford, Garth Barnes, Dilys Barrell, Graham Beale, Angie Boyes, Jackie Chelin, Barbara Clark, Julia Chandler, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Ashleigh Davies, Chris Day, Iain Dobie, Jan Foster, Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Hannah Healy, Sandra Holliday, Peter Jeffries, Tabi Joy, Alisha Lewis, Dr Cathal Lynch, Tony Oliver, Ben Orme, Dr Helen Pemberton, Richard Pineger, Julie Sankey, Stan Smith, Dr Steve Steinhardt, Izaak Tailford, Julian Tooke, Simon Wheeler and Suzanne Williams

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**Contact:** [democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 01242 264 246

**1 Apologies**

**2 Declarations of interest**

**3 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 5 - 14)**

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025

**4 Communications by the Mayor**

**5 Communications by the Leader of the Council**

**6 To receive petitions**

**7 Public Questions**

These must be received no later than 12 noon on Thursday 2 October.

**8 Member Questions**

These must be received no later than 12 noon on Thursday 2 October.

**9 Community Governance Review - Stage 1 results and recommendations (Pages 15 - 44)**

Report of the Leader

**10 Interim review of polling districts, polling places, and polling stations for St Mark's Ward (Pages 45 - 60)**

Report of the Returning Officer

**11 Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (Pages 61 - 72)**

Report of the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel

**12 2024-25 Audit, Compliance and Governance Annual Report (Pages 73 - 96)**

Report of the Chair of the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee

**13 2024-25 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (Pages 97 - 124)**

Report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**14 Notice of Motions**

No motions have been received.

**15 Any other item the Mayor determines as urgent and which requires a decision**

**16 Local Government Act 1972 -Exempt Information**

The committee is recommended to approve the following resolution:-

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Paragraph 5: Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

**17 Exempt Minutes (Pages 125 - 126)**

Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025

Gareth Edmundson  
Chief Executive

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# Cheltenham Borough Council

## Council Minutes

**Meeting date: 21 July 2025**

**Meeting time: 2.30 pm - 3.25 pm**

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**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Martin Horwood (Vice-Chair), Frank Allen, Glenn Andrews, Victoria Atherstone, Paul Baker, Garth Barnes, Dilys Barrell, Angie Boyes, Jackie Chelin, Julia Chandler, Flo Clucas, Ashleigh Davies, Chris Day, Iain Dobie, Jan Foster, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Hannah Healy, Sandra Holliday, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis, Cathal Lynch, Tony Oliver, Ben Orme, Dr Helen Pemberton, Richard Pineger, Julie Sankey, Stan Smith, Izaak Tailford, Julian Tooke and Suzanne Williams

**Also in attendance:**

Paul Jones (Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)), Claire Hughes (Director of Governance, Housing and Communities), Sarah Farooqi (One Legal) and Gemma Bell (Director of Finance and Assets and Deputy S151 Officer)

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### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bamford, Beale, Clark, Collins, Garcia Clamp, Joy, Steinhardt, Wheeler and Willingham.

### **2 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

### **3 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2025 were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.

### **4 Communications by the Mayor**

The Deputy Mayor reported on several events he has recently attended:

- Belmont School Summer Fete, where he won a teapot in the raffle and was very impressed with the efforts of the PTA;
- an impressive Achievement Day at St Edward's School;
- the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party of Cheltenham Lido;
- the Friends of Sandford Park Summer Festival, where he met a new and inspiring environmental group, Guardians of the River Chelt.

The Mayor had provided a list of the many civic events he had attended in the last few weeks, and the Deputy Mayor read out a statement on his behalf. In it he said he had been struck by the diversity of events and activities happening across our town, especially the wide range of things being done to make other people's lives better, and when looking at the local charities supporting those with disabilities, he was reminded how important it is to make sure our public realm is accessible to all.

He also reminded everyone about the Mayor's charity quiz night, to be held in the Albion Club, North Street on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 at 7pm. Tickets are £10 per person, with teams of four to six, include a light buffet supper, and can be bought via the Mayor's page on the CBC website

### **5 Communications by the Leader of the Council**

The Leader said that a lot has happened throughout the borough since the last meeting:

- in July, Planning Committee approved the first application for the Golden Valley Development, the West Cheltenham Southern Parcel. The ambitious masterplan promises 3,700 homes, a million square feet of commercial space, and 12,000 jobs, and contributes to the UK's dream of being a science and tech superpower by 2030;
- the development at 320 Swindon Road is moving forward, with £2.8m funding from Homes England, and Speller Metcalfe as contractor;
- CBC improved its climate action score by 25% according to Climate Emergency UK, placing it 6<sup>th</sup> among UK district averages and top of the rankings within Gloucestershire. As reported to Cabinet this month, air quality monitoring around the Royal Mail depot is no longer required;
- seven of Cheltenham's parks have been awarded a Green Flag in recognition of environmental excellence;
- £136k-worth of grants has been awarded to 17 local projects in non-parished areas through the CIL Neighbourhood Fund;
- comments and contributions to the Community Governance Review consultation shaping parish and town boundaries and governance will be analysed over the summer;
- the No Child Left Behind Party in the Park will take place in Pittville Park on 06 August, with over 50 free and inclusive family activities;
- Horizon Aero Group has been named as the preferred buyer for Gloucestershire Airport, unlocking new opportunities for investment;
- a summer campaign is underway to ensure the town centre remains safe, welcoming and vibrant;

- and finally, Members are encouraged to share the link for the Local Government Reform engagement questionnaire, to give as many of their personal and professional contacts the opportunity to have their say.

### **6 To receive petitions**

There were none.

### **7 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

### **8 Member Questions**

There was one Member question, which was taken as read, together with the response:

#### **Question from Councillor Jan Foster to Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries**

It has been widely reported that Idsall Drive Car Park was sold by Cheltenham Borough Council last year for £282,500. It is now on the market, with planning permission, with an asking price for offers over £550,000.

Given the difference in value that the planning permission makes to a piece of land, why didn't the council apply for planning permission before they sold it?

#### **Cabinet Member response:**

I'd like to thank Councillor Foster for the question. It is important to set some background with regard to Idsall Drive car park. This was never intended to be a development opportunity for the council but rather the car park was offered to the parish council for purchase to be retained as a car park. Sadly, the parish council decided to not proceed with the purchase on behalf of their local residents and therefore the council decided to then proceed with a sale.

With specific regard to Idsall Drive, I am sure that Councillor Foster would acknowledge that the difference in the new asking price and what the council previously sold it for is not clear profit. The design, development and the planning process will have all incurred fees and costs. If the council had proceeded to secure planning for the site we would have had to make an assessment on the officer time and costs associated required to bring this site to planning and then balance that against delivering our other key development priorities. On this criteria, Idsall Drive did not meet the test of being retained and developed by the council.

This council has a long and successful track record of judging where and what to invest in and we are clear that we act as an enabler to support the economic prosperity of our borough and its residents.

At present, our highest development priority, as Councillor Foster knows, is the delivery of the Golden Valley Development. When fully completed, this project will bring hundreds of new, affordable and social rent homes - which are desperately needed in our town, as well as offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to many in our communities to gain skills and employment so they can succeed and prosper. In this context it is disappointing that Councillor Foster is seemingly supportive of developing Idsall Drive Carpark but voted against the Golden Valley Development planning application.

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Foster thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets for his response, but before asking a supplementary question, took a moment to address what was included in the final paragraph. She pointed out that her question had nothing to do with the Golden Valley or affordable housing. She was concerned only with the sale of Idsall Drive car park, about which she attended many meetings and supported a petition in objection, and her question related to what happened after the parish council declined to buy it and CBC was left with an asset that it was determined to sell. With a difference of £267,500 between the original sale and the asking price of £550,000, she asked what the council estimated it would have cost to have drawn up plans and obtain a planning permission before selling the car park.

### **Cabinet Member response**

In response, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said the asking price and the eventual selling price could be very different, but he was not specifically able to give an actual figure on the likely cost of obtaining planning permission for the site. He said he would speak to officers and provide the information as soon as possible.

## **9 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Outturn Report 2024-2025**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets was pleased to present the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Outturn Report for 2024-25, a statutory requirement under financial rules to provide an overview of the council's financial performance.

He said Members will be aware that the ambitious 2024-25 budget required delivery of £2.841m savings, and he was proud to report that despite ongoing external pressures, the council has delivered against budget and ended the year with a modest £913 underspend. This marks a significant shift in financial stability compared with previous years when we relied more heavily on general balances, and although those remain below the optimum level, medium-term financial strategy gives a realistic route to replenishment by March 2026.

The performance reflects strong financial governance and the efforts of Cabinet colleagues, officers and service teams across the organisation, ensuring continuity of key projects. Our capital investment programme continues to support delivery of strategic objectives, particularly climate action, housing, and supporting the local economy, while driving forward the Golden Valley development and supporting the most vulnerable in town. Furthermore, treasury management activities have improved the management of business rates and council tax collection, providing support where possible for the many households facing financial challenges. He said that although the housing revenue account shows a deficit, decisive action has been taken with the reintegration of housing services, and he anticipates this will drive efficiencies and rebuild services over coming years.

In conclusion, he said that the outturn report reflects the importance of building resilience into the system, while strengthening reserves to bring general balance levels to the optimum level as recommended by the S151 officer.

### **Member questions**

While welcoming the very positive report, a Member said a number of residents are wondering whether income from the sale of major assets may have a positive impact on the future of the household recycling centre. A simple response would be appreciated and helpful.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said it is difficult to give a simple response, as any sale has liabilities attached and considerations to take into account, and although the council will be considering how incoming funds will be used, it faced many big financial challenges, especially around its key priorities, so it is difficult to say at this point where the money will be spent.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Green Open Space reiterated that household recycling centres are the responsibility of the county council, but said he is meeting with county colleagues early next month to discuss the matter. No decision has been made; the site is secure and not being sold off, but needs £1m-worth of infrastructure improvements to function safely. He added that the county council is looking at the capacity of household recycling centres across the county generally, and it is noteworthy that since the closure of the Swindon Road site, usage of Wingmoor Farm has gone up by 26%, showing a significant number of Cheltenham residents are making use of that facility, which is now running efficiently at 95% capacity.

There was no debate on this item.

The following recommendations were approved.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- 1. the financial outturn performance position for the General Fund was considered, and it was noted that in delivering services in 2024/25, after the application of carry forward requests and following the use earmarked reserves, there was an underspend of £913 against the 2024/25 revised budget approved by Council on 21 February 2025;**

2. £420,144 of carry forward approved by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers at Appendix 5 was noted;
3. the annual treasury management report at Appendix 7 and note the actual 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators was noted;
4. the capital programme outturn position as detailed in Section 7 of this report and Appendix 8, approve the carry forward of unspent budgets into 2025/26 was noted;
5. the year-end position in respect of Section 106 agreements and partnership funding agreements at Appendix 9 was noted;
6. the outturn position in respect of collection rates for council tax and non-domestic rates for 2024/25 in Appendix 10 was noted;
7. the financial outturn performance position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2024/25 in Appendix 11 was received, and the carry-forward of capital budgets from 2024/25 into 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 12 was approved.

## **10 Corporate Plan Update, End of Year Performance Report and Corporate Plan Refresh**

The Leader introduced the report which presents an overview of the refreshed Corporate Plan for 2025-28, a reassessment of its priorities following the reintegration of housing services to reflect local needs and national development. At the same time, a two-year review of the plan shows where progress has been made and where the council needs to do more, as well as ensuring it stays ahead of the curve in a fast-changing world.

She outlined the five key priorities:

- Securing Our Future
- Quality Homes, Safe and Strong Communities
- Reducing Carbon, Achieving Net Zero, Creating Biodiversity
- Reducing Inequalities, Supporting Better Outcomes
- Taking Care of Your Money

She said the performance report for 2024-25 shows some real wins, with progress on affordable housing, cyber infrastructure and digital services, but also highlights challenges, for example around homelessness prevention and recruitment in planning enforcement.

In conclusion, she reminded Members that the refreshed plan is about building on what is working, fixing what is not, and staying focussed on what matters most to Cheltenham residents.

### **Questions**

In response to a Member's questions, the Leader said she believed that the years referred to in the plan – Year 1, Year 2 etc. – relate to the financial year rather than the calendar year.

### **Debate**

Members welcomed the report, the refreshed plan, and the opportunity to pause and reflect on progress, thanking officers and Cabinet Members for their hard work in driving it forward. They made the following points:

- under Key Priority 4, it would be good to amend the heading to 'continue to build relationships with local, regional, national and international visitor economy stakeholders' in view of the Liberal Democrats and the town being outward-looking and international. Thanks to Richard Gibson for his excellent work in the international arena, and to Andrew Lansley and Ian George of Cheltenham Festivals for their great efforts working with partner towns and raising Cheltenham's international profile;
- the Corporate Plan should be used to showcase the council's ongoing commitment to the UK's efforts towards the United National Sustainable Development Goals, such as Key Priority 2's working directly to achieve Goal 11, regarding sustainable cities and communities. The Member will be happy to look at this with officers and Cabinet colleagues;
- the shift to more vague, overarching key priorities is welcomed, but when delving deeper, there is space for more concrete targets and actions. For example, one of the actions under Key Priority 1 is 'clear social value targets with a main contractor by the end of Year 1', but there is no indication of what the council would like those targets to be; and a target under Key Priority 3 is to construct the innovation centre by the end of Year 2 as a low carbon building, but with no metric defining a low-carbon building, it isn't clear precisely what we exactly want to achieve. The report sets out many great initiatives but doesn't take them far enough;
- the plan is full of good stuff, but while Key Priority 2 clearly shows how hard everyone has worked on the reintegration of housing services and the progress made, the end-of-year performance table shows the number of homeless preventions and relief with a red flag, as a result of rising and increasingly unaffordable rents in the private sector. While stating that the council will set a benchmark for reasonable rents that private landlords will hopefully aspire to, there doesn't appear to be anything in the plan about interventions to encourage this, and just setting a good example on its own may not be enough. It would be good to see more proactive engagements with the private rental sector to prevent unreasonable rents, which would hopefully have a knock-on effect on homelessness.

In response to this opinion, several Members commented as follows:

- the first priority of the Corporate Plan is to secure our future, and as part of that major housing development such as at Golden Valley and Elms Park are being brought forward. The law of supply and demand dictates that with more houses available, property and rental costs will fall;
- the Corporate Plan is a strategic overview of the council's priorities, not a deep dive into the detail of each priority, many of which are already being looked at as part of the Cabinet's workplan;
- homelessness is complicated and not just due to high rent – mental health, dependencies, breakdown of families and other issues all contribute to the problem and are out of the council's control.

The Member replied that, while not an expert on housing, research has shown what other councils are doing, such as limiting Airbnbs, which are problematic in Cheltenham and have been shown in studies to drive up private rentals. She suggested that CBC could maybe monitor Airbnbs or keep a register of all private landlords to ensure they are paying the right amount of council tax.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services thanked the Member for raising this important subject, and said that a report would be going to the Cabinet Housing meeting in September to look at the private rental sector, consider what the council can do to assist through proper agreements, and to give advice where needed. She invited the Member to attend that meeting and ask questions, to ensure an open, decent and honest debate. Regarding Airbnb, she said this is an international problem, and the government needs to take a firm line to prevent it from pushing up rents and removing housing for the people who need it.

Members made the following additional points:

- if any Member has a suggestion or idea for tackling homelessness, they should share it direct with Cabinet colleagues and officers. Airbnbs and the housing shortage are national government issues, but CBC is always trying to find ways to alleviate the problem locally and is proud of its actions;
- homelessness and the housing shortage is a very real and insidious problem and a wide issue, synonymous with national government.

The Leader said Members had covered all the points she would have made, and confirmed that the Corporate Plan is more of an outline – it needs to be short, concise and engaging to encourage people to read it thoroughly, with further detail available for anyone who is interested.

She was happy to incorporate the word ‘international’ in KP4, and the Deputy Mayor confirmed that this is acceptable.

With that small amendment, Members voted on the recommendations and

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

1. **the corporate plan review and end of year performance report is noted;**
2. **the refreshed Corporate Plan 2025 to 2028 is endorsed.**

### **11 Dispensation under section 85 Local Government Act 1972**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report to allow Councillor Joy, who has been unable to attend meetings since March due to ill health, a period of dispensation of up to six months.

The Leader wished Councillor Joy a speedy recovery and return to the fold, and the Deputy Mayor said that this was endorsed by all Members.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously) that:**

- **Councillor Tabi Joy is authorised to be absent from all meetings of the Authority for a period of 6 months with effect from 21 July 2025**



**12 Notice of Motions**

There were none.

**13 Any other item the Mayor determines as urgent and which requires a decision**

There were no other items.

**14 Local Government Act 1972 -Exempt Information**

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

**Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**

**Paragraph 5: Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings**

**15 A Property Matter**

Members considered the report and approved the recommendations.

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## **Cheltenham Borough Council**

### **Full Council 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

## **Community Governance Review – Stage 1 results and recommendations**

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#### **Accountable member:**

Cllr Rowena Hay, Leader of the Council

#### **Accountable officer:**

Claire Hughes, Director of Governance, Housing and Communities (Monitoring Officer)

#### **Ward(s) affected:**

All Wards

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**Key Decision:** No

#### **Executive summary:**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of stage 1 of the consultation that was carried out in respect of the recent Community Governance Review. This report outlines those findings and provides recommendations for the next stage of the review.

#### **Recommendations:**

**Council is recommended to review the full consultation response report (Appendix 3) and consider if the following recommendations should be taken forward for further consultation, including by way of a further survey and additional options such as focus groups:**

- 1. To complete a full review of the boundaries of Swindon Village Parish**

**and Prestbury Parish, including Wyman's Brook to establish which Parish it should sit in**

- 2. To complete a full review of the unparished area between Prestbury and Charlton Kings to understand if it should be incorporated into one of the already established councils**
  - 3. To consider setting up a new Parish for Benhall and The Reddings**
  - 4. To directly ask the public, in stage 2 of the Community Governance Review, if they would like to see a Town Council in Cheltenham. This consultation question would provide an overview of what a Town Council could be responsible for and provide some options as to its boundaries.**
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## **1. Implications**

### **1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications**

There are no direct finance and property implications of the decision in this report. The consultation will be undertaken using existing systems and software which already have approved budget. The implications from any recommendations from the review may have finance or property implications which will be considered as part of any reporting of the review conclusions.

Signed by: Jon Whitlock [Jon.Whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Jon.Whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.2 Legal implications**

The Council, as principal council, has authority to take decisions about parish electoral governance arrangements under Sections 79 and 102(2) the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

A Borough Council that is undertaking a review, must notify the County Council that the review for its area is to be undertaken and the terms of reference (including any modifications to those Terms), as per section 79(3).

Sections 81 – 84 of the said Act cover relevant aspect of the Terms of reference for the review. These are to be the Terms under which the review is to be undertaken and approved by the Council. The Terms must specify the area under review and any modifications to make to them, for example, following any petition that may be received during the course of the review. As per the Guidance, there is no 'one size fits all' approach, nevertheless on general principles, the Terms of reference should set out clearly the matters on which a community governance review is to focus. As soon as practicable after deciding the Terms, they must be published.

A petition may still be received and there is a duty under section 84 or power to respond under section 85 of the Act, dependent on the Terms of reference approved.

Section 102(6) provides the Terms of reference of a community governance review “allow for a community governance petition or community governance application to be considered” if the terms of reference of the review are such that—(a) the area under review includes the whole of the petition area or application area; and (b) the recommendations to be considered by the review include all of the petition's or application's specified recommendations.

Council Functions states that functions relating to Community governance are reserved to Council as referred in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.

Signed by: One Legal, [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

### **1.3 Environmental and climate change implications**

The benefits associated with this report such as the retention and improvement of community engagement and cohesion, local democracy and the delivery of effective local services have positive environmental implications. Local community parishes play a crucial role in communicating the impacts of climate change, raising awareness, and promoting sustainable practices.

Signed by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, [maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Securing our future
- Reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes

### **1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

See Appendix 2

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## **2 Background**

2.1 Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) is moving into a period of change, with central government looking to reform local government by creating new unitary councils. In Gloucestershire there are currently three potential models being explored.

2.2 In light of the upcoming changes, the council wants to make sure that it retains

## Page 18

and improves community engagement and cohesion; local democracy; and the delivery of effective local services. This Community Governance Review (CGR) is one tool in helping with this. A CGR is a legal process that gives residents and organisations the chance to share their views on the most suitable ways of representing the people at a community level.

2.3 The main purpose of this review is to understand whether there is support for setting up any new town or parish councils in the borough or whether any of the existing parish councils of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton with Warden Hill, Prestbury, Swindon Village or Up Hatherley wish to amend their existing boundaries.

2.4 This report covers the first stage of the review, which was mainly focused on a survey. The survey asked all households and interested parties to respond and also allowed anyone to email in more detailed proposals.

2.5 Please see the timeline of events for the CGR below

Date	Action
12 May 2025	Full Council approved the terms of reference, signifying the start of the review. <a href="#">Visit the meeting page for more information</a>
19 May – 18 July 2025	First period of public consultation
August – September 2025	Review by officers and working group and development of draft recommendations
13 October 2025	Draft recommendations to be considered by Council and approved for the second round of consultation
20 October – 19 December 2025	Second public consultation
January – February 2026	Review by officers and working group and development of final recommendations
27 February 2026	Full Council discuss and agree final recommendations
February 2026	Reorganisation Order made

2.6 A community governance review can make several changes when there is clear evidence to do so.

2.7 This can include:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes\*
- changes to electoral arrangements for parishes including:
- the ordinary year of an election
- number of parish councillors

## Page 19

- changes to parish wards (we are not looking to change ward boundaries, but all feedback will be considered)
- converting a parish council to a parish meeting\*
- changing the name or the style of a new town or parish council or parish meeting
- grouping parishes together under a common parish

\*This review is not looking to abolish any existing parish councils, however all feedback will be considered

### 2.8 Changes it cannot make

- A Community Governance Review cannot:
- change the number of district or county councillors
- change a district or county council ward boundaries
- change the amount of money that a parish council raises through your Council Tax (known as a precept)
- change individual town or parish councillors
- create a unitary authority
- Any decision relating to parish arrangements must ensure that those arrangements:
- reflect the identity and interests of local communities
- ensure effective and convenient local governance
- Any other factors, such as council tax precept levels, cannot be considered.

## 3 Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The recommendations have been developed based on the results of the survey; full details of the results can be found in Appendix 3. However, reasons for each recommendation are detailed below.

3.2 To complete a full review of the boundaries of Swindon Village Parish and Prestbury Parish, including Wyman's Brook to establish which Parish it should sit in

3.2.1 Why – this was recommended as part of one of the more detailed proposals that was provided in the consultation, furthermore a number of survey responses mention Wyman's Brook.

3.3 To complete a full review of the unparished area between Prestbury and Charlton Kings to understand if it should be incorporated into one of the already established councils

3.3.1 Why – this was a recommended in two of the more detailed proposals in

response to the consultation.

### 3.4 To consider setting up a new Parish for Benhall and The Reddings

3.4.1 Why – this was a key focus of a number of survey responses and was also suggested in one detailed proposal that focused on the Town council, but made other recommendations

3.5 To directly ask the public, in stage 2 of the CGR, if they would like to see a Town Council in Cheltenham. This consultation question would provide an overview of what a Town Council could be responsible for and provide some options as to its boundaries.

3.5.1 Why – the development of a Town Council was suggested by a number of respondents to the survey, and a more detailed proposal was also provided

## 4 Alternative options considered

4.1 Council could decide not to proceed with some or all of the recommendations

## 5 Consultation and feedback

5.1 Consultation taken with councillors (including parish councillors), Community Governance Review working group and Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils. This report brings forward the details of stage 1 of the consultation in relation to the CGR.

## 6 Key risks

6.1 See Appendix 1

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### Report author:

Victoria Bishop, Governance, Risk and Assurance Manager

### Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening
- iii. Full CGR report



## Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
1.	If the recommendations and subsequent outcomes are not completed within the relevant LGR timescales then there is a risk that benefits of any outcomes may not be felt by communities	Claire Hughes	4	4	16	Reduce	Actively monitor progress via the CGR Cabinet Working Group  Link in with LGR work through LGR programme management	Claire Hughes	Page 21
2.	There may be changes in the indicative timetable provided for the review	Claire Hughes	2	2	4	Accept	Actively monitor progress via the CGR Cabinet Working Group	Claire Hughes	
3.	If there are insufficient resources to complete the recommendations this could impact the timeline of CGR and the outcome of Stage 2	Claire Hughes	4	4	16	Reduce	Once Stage 2 is complete we will know the extent of the work and review resources. Likelihood may reduce if not all recommendations are approved	Claire Hughes	

## Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Claire Hughes	Service Area: Governance, Housing and Communities
Title: Director of Governance, Housing and Communities	Date of assessment: 29 September 25
Signature: C.Hughes	

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Other

If other, please specify: Consultation

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Community Governance Review

Is this new or existing?

New or proposed

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

The main aim of the CGR is to ensure that the public are appropriately consulted and given a voice when it comes to town and parish councils in their area, this is particularly relevant in light of local governance reorganisation and future unitarisation.

Objectives:

1. To understand if there were any proposals regarding changes to existing parishes
2. To understand if there any proposals for new parish or town councils

Outcomes:	The intended outcome of Stage 1 was to ensure that recommendations were developed in order to conduct Stage 2 of the consultation.
Benefits:	The public are likely to benefit from this consultation, in addition to already established parish councils as they can provide their opinion on local councils in their area.

#### e. What are the expected impacts?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.

**No**

Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?

**No impact expected**

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

If recommendations result in future changes to parish and town councils then this could have an impact on how services are managed and council impact the lives of people. However at this time we are still only at the next stage of consultation so this cannot be fully assessed.

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

#### f. Identify next steps as appropriate

Stage Two required

**No**

Owner of Stage Two assessment

Completion date for Stage Two assessment

**Please move on to Stage 2 if required ([intranet link](#))**

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# Community Governance Review

## Stage 1 results



### Contents

1. Executive Summary .....	1
2. Aims of this report and methodology .....	1
3. Quantitative analysis .....	2
4. Qualitative analysis .....	8
5. Recommendations .....	15
6. Next steps .....	16
7. Appendix .....	17

### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the consultation that was carried out in respect of the recent Community Governance Review. This report outlines those findings and provides recommendations for the next stage of the review.

1.2 Four recommendations have been made:

- To complete a full review of the boundaries of Swindon Village Parish and Prestbury Parish, including Wyman's Brook to establish which Parish it should sit in
- To complete a full review of the unparished area between Prestbury and Charlton Kings to understand if it should be incorporated into one of the already established councils
- To consider setting up a new Parish for Benhall and The Reddings
- Cheltenham. This consultation question would provide an overview of what a Town Council could be responsible for and provide some options as to its boundaries.

### 2. Aims of this report and methodology

2.1 This report's aims are as follows:

- To explore the responses provided in Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review (CGR) and provide some analysis of the survey responses
- To present any full proposals for new Town or Parish Councils or changes to pre-existing parish councils
- To provide a number of recommendations which will form the basis of Stage 2 of the CGR

#### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Quantitative analysis: both the automatic analysis that is provided by Microsoft forms was utilised, alongside excel, in order to provide more of an insight into the answers given by those who responded.

2.2.2 Where appropriate, analysis has been conducted to show where some questions linked with others and to see if there was any impact on certain questions dependent on the area of Cheltenham they are referring to.

2.2.3 Qualitative analysis: broadly speaking thematic analysis was used to group the information provided in the free text questions. In order to not change the meaning of suggestions or answers, these quotes have in the most part been kept as the original answer given. In some cases, a summary has been provided where answers were very similar or where specific suggestions were not identified.

2.2.4 Proposals: where more detailed proposals have been provided, these have been summarised for the purpose of the report. For reassurance, when reviewing the proposal, it was considered in full. Any maps have been added to the appendix.

2.2.5 In order to develop the recommendations, all survey responses and proposals were reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring officer, who drafted the initial recommendations. Following these they were reviewed by the CGR working group (made up of Council Members of Cheltenham Brough Council). Members were presented with the recommendations documented in this report and asked to review them (alongside the report in full).

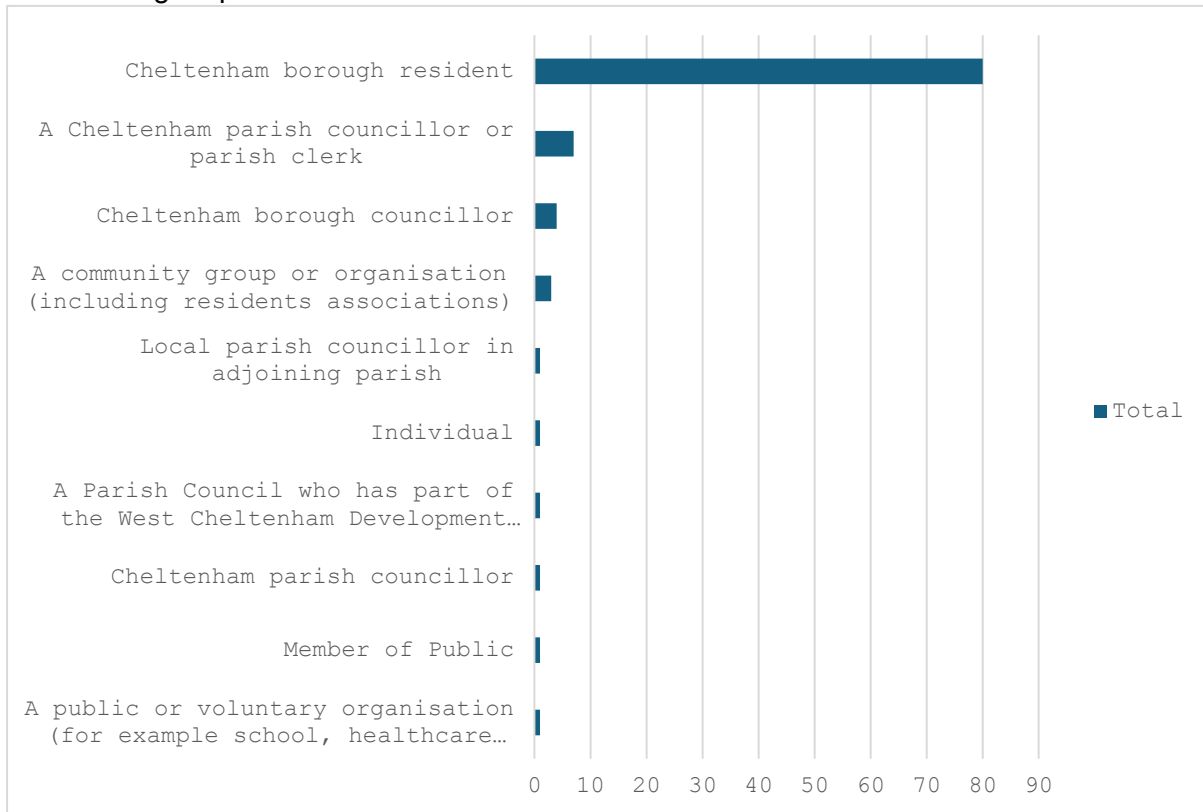
### 3. Quantitative analysis

#### 3.1 Who responded?

3.1.1 101 responses were provided to the survey, 99 of these responses were online and 2 were in paper form. With a population of 118.84K this means that there is a 9.55% confidence level, meaning we can only be 90% confident that the answers provided are representative of Cheltenham residents. In order to reduce the margin of error to 5% providing a 95% confidence, we would have needed 383 responses to the survey.

3.1.2 Some full proposals were emailed into the inbox provided; these were all from already established local councils. This does increase the representation of responses; however we cannot accurately assess how members of the public might have been consulted in the development of these proposals.

3.1.3 When asked in what capacity are you are responding to this consultation, we received the following responses:



### 3.2 How they heard about the survey?

3.2.1 We asked respondents to provide information on how they heard about the consultation, the following responses were received:

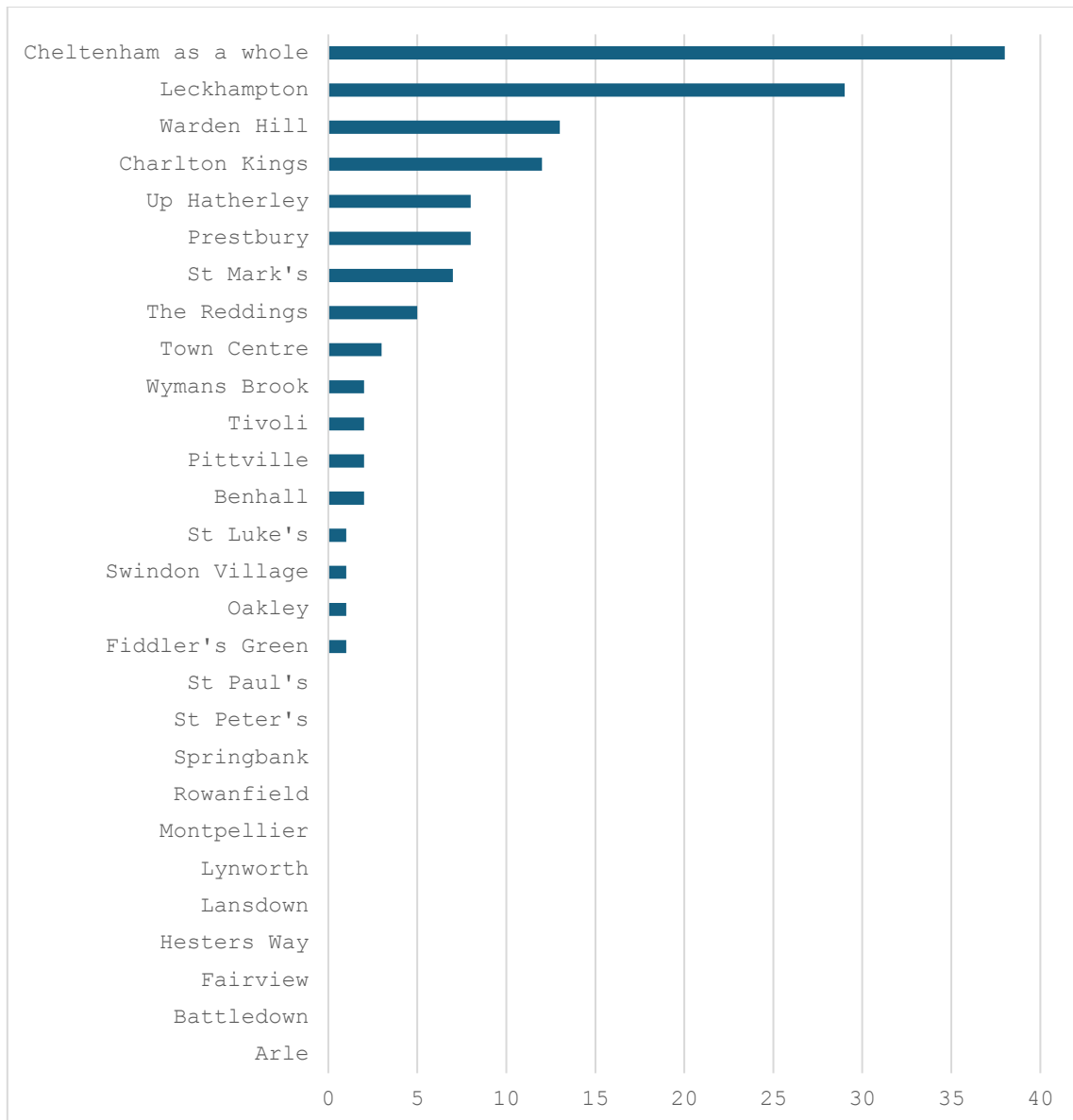
Form of communication	Count of responses
Leaflet or flyer	24
Cheltenham Borough Council's social media	15
Other social media	10
Your local councillor	9
Local news/media	6
Word of mouth	6
Cheltenham Borough Council's website	3
Other social media/ Your local councillor	1
Word of mouth/Cheltenham Borough Council's website	1

3.2.2 A number of respondents also selected other and informed us they were told through their Parish Council or a community group.

### **3.3 Areas of Cheltenham**

3.3.1 When asked which area of Cheltenham respondents wished to comment on, the following responses were provided:



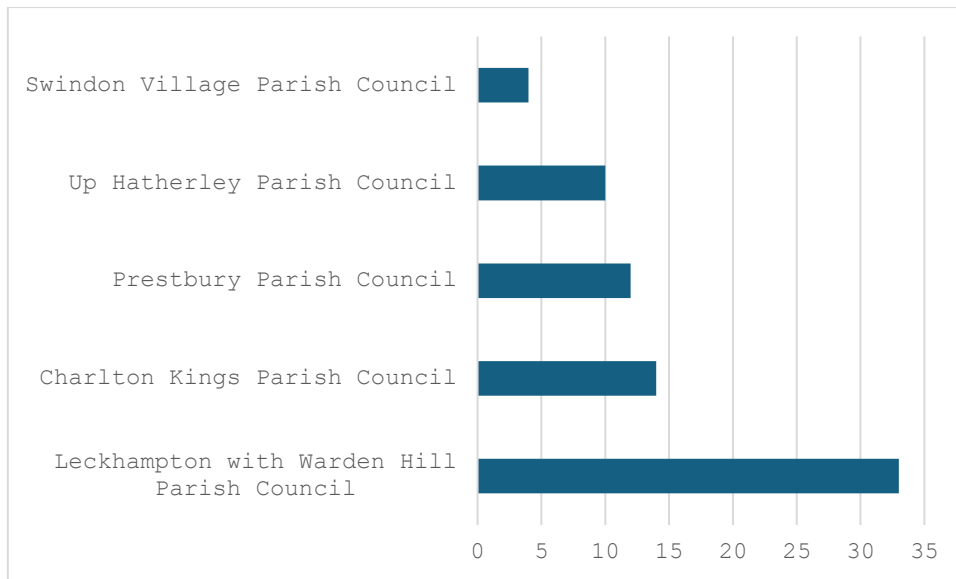


3.3.2 Unfortunately, no responses were received in respect of St Paul's, St Peter's Springbank, Rowanfield, Montpellier, Lynworth, Lansdown, Hesters Way, Fairview, Battledown or Arle. This may be because respondents did not have any comments to make on those areas or considered those areas to be aligned with other parts of Cheltenham. Alternatively, we do acknowledge that those areas may not have received information about this consultation and therefore may not have been able to comment. We will be reflecting on the feedback provided in Stage 1 to improve our communication for Stage 2.

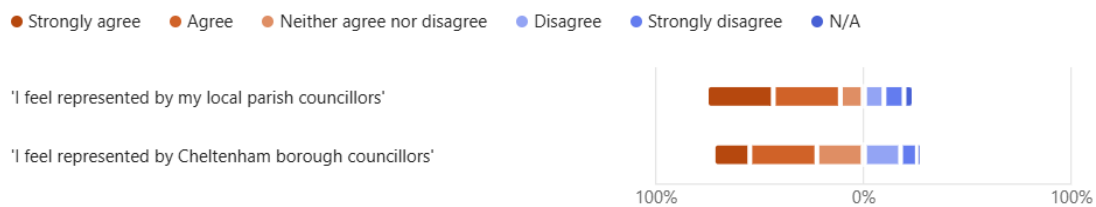
### 3.4 Existing Parishes

3.4.1 63% of respondents wished to comment on existing parishes.

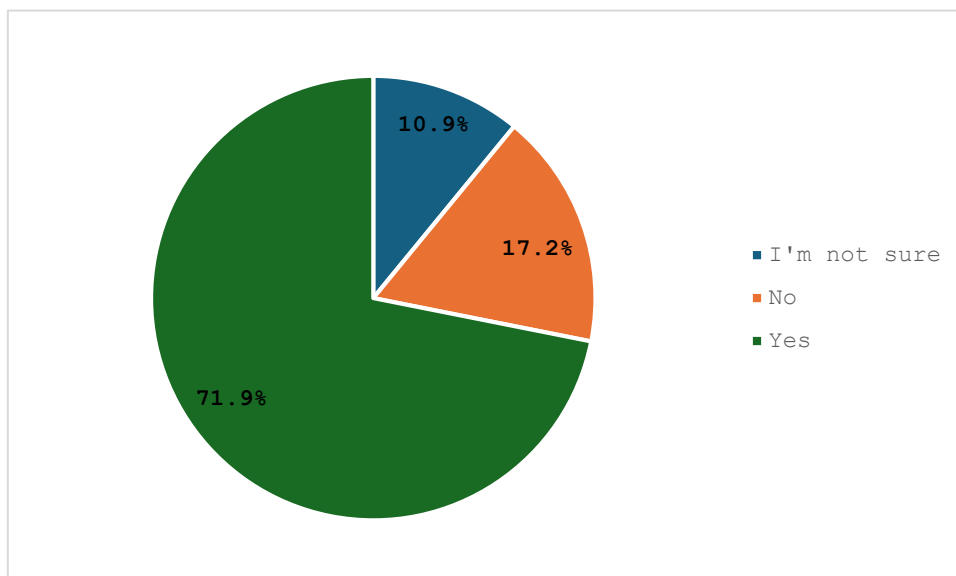
3.4.2 When asked which council they wished to comment on, responses were as below, with Leckhampton and Warden Hill Parish being the most popular response:



3.4.3 When asked how much they agree with the following statements, respondents said the following:



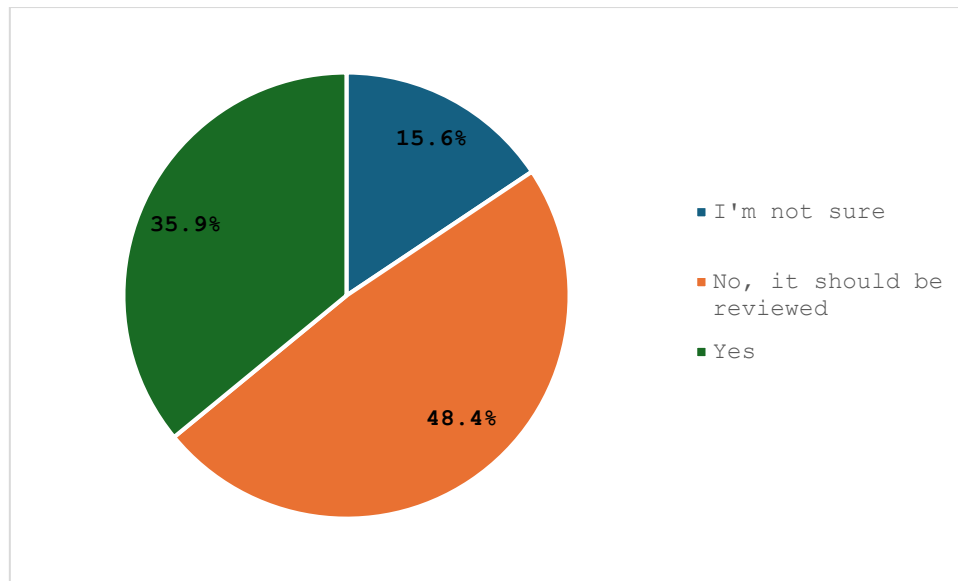
3.4.4 Most respondents feel that the name of their parish reflects their community (71.9%).



3.4.5 asked

When if

respondents felt the parish boundary they were commenting on was suitable for the community, responses were somewhat split, 35.9% said yes, however 48.4% said no it should be reviewed.



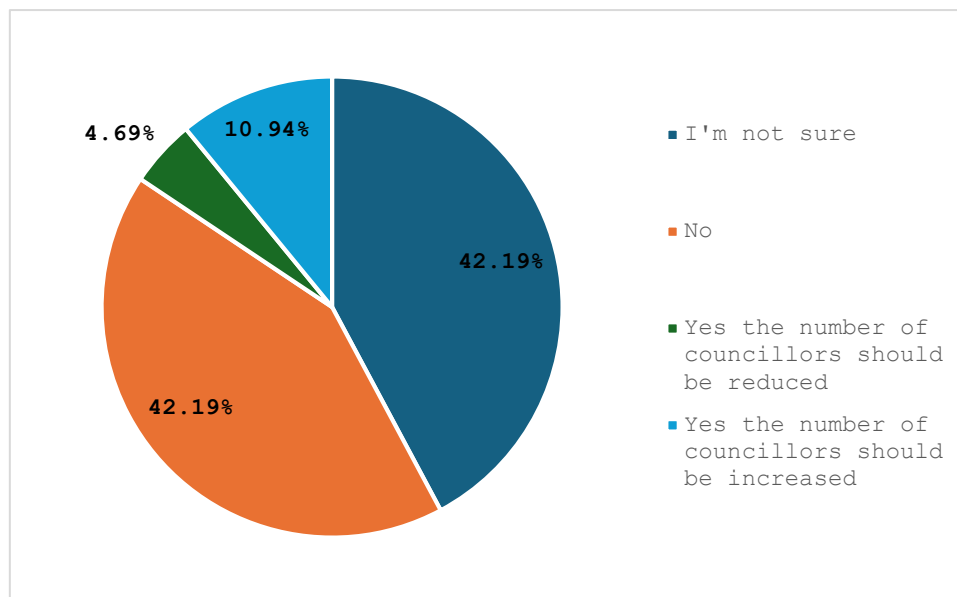
3.11 Of those who said no, 11% were commenting on the area of Prestbury and 6% were commenting on Cheltenham as a whole. The rest were relatively split across many different areas of Cheltenham (with around 2% per area).

3.12 Of those who said yes, 9% were commenting on Charlton Kings, 8% were commenting on Warden Hill and 8% were commenting on Leckhampton. This is somewhat contradictory to the free-text comments which are explored more in the next section.

3.13 Those who responded 'I'm not sure' were relatively split across areas of Cheltenham.

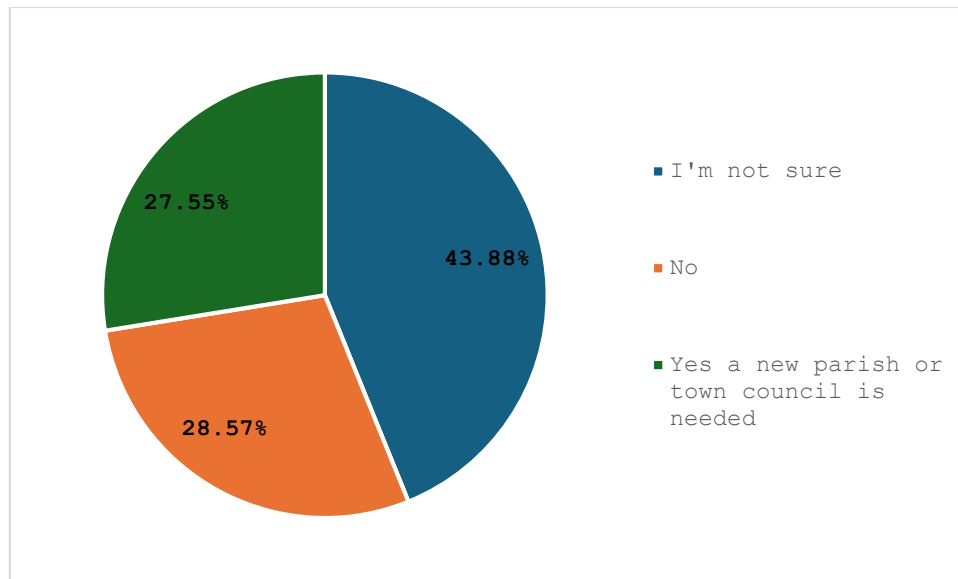
### 3.5 Councillor Numbers

3.5.1 When asked if councillor numbers should change, the following responses were provided, most people said no, or not sure. Of those who said yes several said that change should be proportional to the parish area.



### 3.6 New Town or Parish Council

3.6.1 Respondents were then asked if a new Parish or Town Council should be created. Most people said No or I'm not sure. For those who said yes and provided more detail, their answers are explored more in the qualitative analysis.



## 4. Qualitative analysis

4.1 There were several free text questions asked throughout the survey. These questions were:

4.2 Question 13 – “Do you think the name of your parish reflects your community and its identity” Please tell us why below. If you have an alternative name suggestion for your parish, you may wish to include this in your answer.

- Of the 101 responses, 90 did not provide a comment to this question, therefore only 10 free text responses were received.

4.3 Question 15 – “Do you think your parish boundary is suitable for your community?” Please describe how you think this boundary, or boundaries should change.

- Of the 101 responses, 42 did not provide a comment to this question.

4.4 Question 17 – “Should the number of councillors in your parish council change?” Please enter any additional comments

- Of the 101 responses, 74 did not provide a comment, 26 comments were received on the number of councillors.

4.5 Question 19 – “Should a new parish or town council be created in Cheltenham?” Please describe your proposal, including how it should be created, suggested boundaries, and a name for the new parish.

- Of the 101 responses received 78 respondents did not provide a proposal, 20 provided a suggestion and 3 provided a full proposal.

4.6 Question 20 - Do you have any further comments on Stage One of the CGR?

- Of the 101 responses received, 55 did not provide any further comments.
- Of those who did provide comment a number of themes were identified:
  1. Comments on the survey and or process of a CGR itself
  2. Lack of communication of this review

3. Issues regarding bureaucracy or finances at local government level
4. General opinions given on CBC
5. Comments regarding specific councillors or parishes
6. Comments on the Cheltenham boundaries with neighbouring councils, which was not the focus of this review

4.7 The remaining free text comments have then been grouped below.

### 4.8 Suggestions but not full proposals

4.8.1 When providing comment on the amendment to Parishes, comments largely fell into two groups, those commenting on Leckhampton and Warden Hill Parish Council, and those commenting on Prestbury Parish Council.

#### 4.8.2 Leckhampton and Warden Hill:

- “Polling district EB should be added to Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish”
- “Polling district TA should also be added to Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish”
- “Polling district TD, being included in Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish”
- “The piece to the right of Old Bath Road up to Pillford Road/Ct from Everest Road roundabout should be brought into Leckhampton”
- “All of the Leckhampton addresses should be part of Leckhampton parish”
- “I notice that the Redrow development off Farm Lane is not included within the Leckhampton parish, this should be considered”
- “Leckhampton has a long history, and would benefit from a parish council focussed on this community. At the moment, the current parish boundary includes arbitrary parts of Warden Hill, which have no historical or geographical connection to Leckhampton. It doesn't even include all of Warden Hill. Warden Hill was only recently taken under the wing of Leckhampton Parish Council after it was unable to sustain itself as an active parish council. The experiment of including Warden Hill within Leckhampton PC has not been a success”
- “I feel that certain areas next to Leckhampton should be included in this parish such as Bournside and parts of Old Bath Road”
- “Leckhampton and warden hill could take in Bournside and pilley areas which do not have a parish council”
- “Leckhampton and warden hill should include Pilford Road which is currently not in the parish”
- “We would like to add polling district EB in Leckhampton which is currently unparished, but which faces Leckhampton (most of the roads being cul-de-sac joining the Old Bath Road) and in which local people believe they live in Leckhampton not Charlton Kings or any other parish or area”
- “We would also like to add polling districts TA and TD, the Bournside area of Warden Hill. This is also currently unparished but has been represented by Warden Hill ward borough councillors and the Leckhampton & Warden Hill County councillor for many years and includes the whole length of Warden Hill Road”
- “The number of new builds on the Leckhampton side of the A46 may alter the balance with Warden Hill. Not sure whether it is still appropriate or effective to keep them under a single parish council”
- “When LWWH parish was expanded in 2018, the small area of housing between LWWH parish and Charlton Kings parish was not included. If CBC were merged into Gloucestershire or into a new unitary authority it would make sense to include these area in one or other of the two parishes depending on what the residents prefer. In

the past there has also been suggestion of splitting LWWH parish and merging WH with Hatherley and Park Ward and then including the wards north of the Leckhampton parish area into a new Leckhampton Parish. Personally, I think the present LWWH parish boundary works well, but it could be enlarged a bit to the north without making the parish too large to be effective. Around 2016-2018 all of the CBC councillors for WH and Leckhampton wards were members also of LWWH parish council and this worked well. It is a good model for how a parish council should work to represent residents if the borough council were to be abolished.”

- “Adjacent non-parished areas (e.g. Pilley) should be included [In Leckhampton Parish], to reach as far as the borough boundary and that of neighbour parishes (Hatherley, Charlton Kings)”
- “I live in the Pilley area (Southfield Approach) and so am just outside the boundaries of the existing parishes. I think this area should be included in Leckhampton with Warden Hill parish so that we have local representation at parish level as well as at Borough Council level”
- “Split Leckhampton and Warden Hill.”

### **4.8.3 Prestbury:**

- “Prestbury is a split Parish with the Wyman's Brook area almost totally ignored”
- “The Wymans Brook area within the existing parish boundary just does not seem to fit in to the rest of Prestbury”
- “The western boundary of Prestbury parish is much too far from the village”
- “Move Prestbury parish to Prestbury village”
- “The western extent that almost reaches Swindon Village and part of the Windyridge area is too far from the heart of Prestbury and should be removed from the parish”

### **4.8.4 The remaining suggestions were as follows:**

- “The boundary for Charlton Kings should end at Sandy Lane, a natural divide between Leckhampton and Charlton Kings”
- “The current Parish Boundary adequately reflects the community of Up Hatherley apart from the fact that the rural element of the Parish was lost when Tewkesbury Borough Council was formed as parish boundaries cannot cross those of the Borough. The Reddings could easily be integrated into Up Hatherley as we share many common issues/ problems. This would work geographically and also because of those shared interests , however if Benhall decide to from a Parish Council it may also work for The Reddings to join in with them” [SIC]
- “a good model might be to expand existing parish councils to cover all of Cheltenham perhaps also creating a new central parish and to greatly expand the role of the C5 meetings, which currently provide co-ordination between borough and parishes”

### **4.8.5 Some responses provided comment on new Parishes or Town Council:**

Many of these responses suggested parishing, unparished areas for example:

- “The unparished areas of Warden Hill and Leckhampton should be included”
- “The Reddings is a growing parish and should be represented as a parish council with Benhall”
- “All of Cheltenham should have devolved parish councils to ensure local democracy continues in light of the government's change to unitary authorities”

- “St Mark’s doesn’t have a parish council...I propose Cheltenham Poets Parish Council as a name”
- “Areas of Cheltenham not currently parishes will need representation / management outside of the existing parishes following LGR as many responsibilities will be passed down from whatever Unitary set up is finalised” [SIC]
- “The large unparished area of central and west Cheltenham should be made into TWO new parishes, divided by the railway line, leaving the existing outer parishes broadly alone”
- “We would like the review to consider the creation of a new parish council for Benhall and The Reddings that would serve the particular needs of this part of Cheltenham, which we believe are different from other non-parished areas of the town that may also fall into a new town council. Discussions about the prospect of a B&R parish have taken place and have local support. The community centre is a valuable asset and a parish council for our area would be in a strong position to take on its management and maximise its benefit for local residents, ensuring its long-term sustainability. The R&DCA committee would welcome the opportunity to consult further with the Council on this”

### 4.8.6 Other comments focused on a Town Council:

- “When Gloucestershire becomes unitary depending on the boundaries there may be a need for a Cheltenham Town Council to represent the people of Cheltenham with the large unitary”
- “When new unitary authority is created we will need to have a town council for Cheltenham and probably abolish Parish Councils”
- “Once borough and County councils are abolished, Cheltenham will need a town council so residents have a more accessible body to access”
- “As per my previous comments, it would be good if a Cheltenham Town Council could be established which encompasses all the unparished parts of Cheltenham”
- “It looks as if the Borough Councillors who represent St Marks now may be swept away under reorganisation proposals. If this is going to be the case, we need to create a new parish or Town Council to represent the local people”
- “Create a town council to complement the existing parish councils”
- “Should the expansion of Swindon Parish Council not be possible, I would then recommend unparished areas in the ward are integrated under a Town Council for Cheltenham. I would suggest this Town Council is established in either case to ensure residents in unparished parts of Cheltenham still have that level of local representation when the unitary authority is established”

## 4.9 Other ‘General’ views

4.9.1 Some of the comments provided in the free text boxes had concerns about Parish or Town council set ups generally:

- “I’d do away with the parish set up”
- “Too many parishes (our address is Up Hatherley, but we are classed as Warden Hill/Leckhampton). Parishes should be merged for efficiency”
- “A single parish for the whole of Cheltenham”
- “Cheltenham itself does not need a new town/borough council”
- “Merge current parishes to create South, Southwest, Southeast etc”
- “I am concerned that when town and borough councils are dissolved, and unitary council (one/two for Gloucestershire) is created there will be a need to create new

parish councils and/or town councils for un-parishes areas (most of Cheltenham) so we will end up with just as much red tape and the public still not understanding who is responsible for which services and we'll have spent hundreds of thousands £ on the reorganisation" [SIC]

- "The only slight positive from being in the enlarged parish should be their input on planning decisions - but the Borough Council are the LPA and the objections by the parish seem to be ignored anyway so I suggest doing away with the extra layer of bureaucracy"

4.9.2 There were also some general views provided that didn't focus on a specific proposal:

- Some people opposed the idea of a town council, stating it could be at the expense of current parish councils or be too big for Cheltenham
- Some gave personal views on not wanting to change parishes as they were happy paying for the parish they are in
- Others provided general views on parish councillor numbers, stating they should only increase in proportion to the size of the parish
- One person said "A complete review of all parishes and boundaries taking into account new property developments is probably overdue"
- Another said: "LGR may increase the remit of parish councils and therefore their governance and accountability needs strengthening"

### 4.10 Full proposals/ more detailed proposals

4.10.1 In addition to comments provided in the survey, some, more detailed proposals were provided:

#### 4.10.2 Proposal 1 - Swindon Village Parish amendment (from survey responses)

Summary: There are areas of the Swindon Village ward which are currently unparished, such as the areas south of Wyman's Brook and south of Swindon Road from Bridge Street to Queen Street, which could really benefit from being part of Swindon Parish Council. Swindon Parish Council's borders should be expanded to include the whole of Swindon Village ward.

- a) Swindon Parish Council already covers Mandarin Way and Pendil Close in Wyman's Brook, and I believe it would strongly help community cohesion if the Swindon Parish Council boundary was extended to cover all of the unparished parts of Wyman's Brook (down to Swindon Road).
- b) The Parish Council should also be expanded to cover the area of Swindon Village ward from Swindon Road down to Bridge Street and up to Queen Street.
- c) Crucially, areas of higher deprivation will have access to Parish Council funds if the Parish Council's boundary is expanded (particularly CIL money, which is allocated specifically to Parishes). This could unlock significant improvements to the local area, and help tackle graffiti, fly-tipping, traffic, and other issues across the whole of the ward.
- d) I'm conscious that attempts to implement a Neighbourhood Forum for unparished residents have been discussed previously. However, many of the residents in unparished areas of the ward do not have the time or resources to establish such a Forum. It therefore would be good to have an already established Parish Council representing them.



[If accepted] this could potentially result in a move to a larger council with multiple employees. That said, the new developments in the Parish Council's already existing boundaries could contribute a significant amount of CIL funding to the Parish Council, which may help alleviate potential costs with expansion and could, in fact, make expansion more feasible.

I would also recommend, if possible, that areas of Prestbury Parish Council in the Swindon Village ward (from Mandarin Way to the railway line by St Nicholas Church) are transferred from Prestbury Parish Council to Swindon Parish Council. This is again to help with representative and communal cohesion.

### **4.10.3 Proposal 2 - Prestbury parish proposal (see Appendix A for maps regarding this proposal)**

Summary: Three elements to the proposal:

1. There is a clear unparished gap between Prestbury and Charlton Kings Parish that includes Priors Farm. The boundary of Charlton Kings Parish at Battledown is clear and logical, so we suggest this unparished area is brought into Prestbury by extending the Parish boundary to follow the Borough Boundary between Noverton and the boundary with Charlton Kings Parish.
2. We also propose to bring Whaddon into Prestbury Parish. The obvious boundary, especially after the previous change, would be to follow Hewlett Road west to Pitville Circus Road, then follow that to the Prestbury Road roundabout, proceed along Wellington Road and then north up Evesham Road. We would continue this new boundary up Evesham Road until it meets our existing boundary at the Hyde Brook crossing. This detaches the part of the Parish that forms the northern part of Wymans Brook from Prestbury. [SIC]
3. We believe that the outcome should be to have the entire area comprising CBC represented by Town or Parish Councils. We are proposing a central Cheltenham Town Council, and a ring of Parish Councils based on the existing Parishes, but adapted to ensure all areas are covered.

We believe that the next stage of consultation must address the question of how facilities unlike any currently managed by a parish council and currently provided by CBC are to be delivered. Examples include the Cemetery, the major parks and the Honeybourne line. Similarly, relationships between Parish and Town Councils and the Cheltenham Trust will need to be clarified. Small parks and play areas will also need consideration, as will office facilities for new Councils.

### **4.10.4 Proposal 3 - Swindon Village parish council proposal (See Appendix B for maps regarding this proposal)**

Summary: With the addition of Elms Park, the nature of the Parish will change significantly. Elms Park will triple the number residential properties in the Parish. It will provide a local centre with wide ranging community facilities alongside a natural "town centre" similar to Bath Road near Gloucestershire University or London Road at the centre of Charlton Kings. Elms Park, once fully developed, will also provide much improved pedestrian connections between the north and south of the Parish. Presently the main residential centres are cut in two by the Kingsditch industrial estate and agricultural land with limited north-south footpaths. 20th July 2025

Our response to this community governance has been developed to reflect this significant change to the Parish, centred on the new hub and facilities at the southern end of Elms Park just North of Tewkesbury Road. This area is outside the boundaries of Cheltenham Borough Council. Whilst we acknowledge that its inclusion inside the Parish is outside of the scope of this CGR we believe its impact is so fundamental to the Parish, we can't not ignore it.

The Council proposes three principal changes to the Parish Boundaries (shown below):

- a) Expansion to the West: a merger with Uckington Parish Council providing one single authority to manage Elms Park and the surrounding area,
- b) Expansion to the South: reflecting the impact of new residential developments along Village Road and their proximity to Elms Park's new centre,
- c) Options to the East: the inclusion of currently parished areas of Wymans Brook in a new Parish Council area.

#### **4.10.5 Proposal 4 - Charlton Kings proposal:**

Summary: We welcome Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) undertaking a full CGR ahead of likely local government reorganisation. We see the benefits of parishing the borough and believe parish and town councils strengthen communities. However, we do not believe parishing an area makes a community, and it is imperative already established communities are considered when any plans are made. The proposal falls into 5 elements:

- 1. The unparished area to the east of Old Bath Road is within the current Balcarras catchment and we feel it would be sensible for these residents to join our parish.
- 2. The boundary between CKPC and Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council runs through a group of houses on Daisybank Road, with neighbours in different parishes. This seem unnecessary and could be amended to keep residents together.
- 3. There is also an argument to include properties to the east of Hales Road in our parish. However, if the Coltham Fields area were to be parished, we feel residents there would doubtless prefer to be included in that new parish area.
- 4. The same can be said for the Oakley Farm development. We are already actively considering how we can welcome residents of this new community into our parish. However, we also see merits in them joining a parished area in Oakley were that to be created.
- 5. We strongly believe residents in Birdlip Road should remain part of our parish regardless of any new parished area north of them. They were consulted in 2017, along with three other areas of the parish, and stated their preference to be part of Charlton Kings. These properties cannot be accessed by car from Oakley and as such should not be included in any new parish area.

#### **4.10.6 Proposal 5 - Town Council**

Summary: My suggested name for the new parish council should be Cheltenham Spa Town Council. This would have a strong historical resonance, emphasise its connection with the town centre rather than the peripheral parishes and clearly distinguish it from the (soon to be) former Cheltenham Borough Council.

The unitary council, envisaged by HMG's local government reorganisation, is created to avoid the obvious anomaly of having a Cheltenham Borough Council simultaneously with a new Town Council. [SIC] It should ideally emulate other significant town councils like

Taunton, Bridgwater, Abingdon and Witney and be ambitious to take over discretionary services particularly important to Cheltenham such as arts funding for institutions like the Cheltenham Festivals, Wilson Art Gallery and Museum and Everyman Theatre and Cheltenham's central parks and gardens.

The boundaries of the new Town Council should exclude the existing C5 parishes and any new peripheral parish area where the community expresses a strong desire to establish a parish or community council. The most obvious candidates for this would be the Benhall and the Reddings area which has a strong sense of local identity, and the Hesters Way area (perhaps with Springbank) which has already established a Neighbourhood Forum that has drafted a Neighbourhood Plan.

A prerequisite for establishing a Town Council in the centre and/or west of town that ran significant discretionary services like parks and arts would be that agreement would have to be reached with the existing and new parishes to raise equivalent precepts and remit much of these to the new Cheltenham Spa Town Council to run these services on behalf of the whole town. It would not be acceptable for a central Town Council to raise a precept comparable to larger town councils elsewhere like Cirencester (£252), Taunton (£299) or Bridgwater (£411) to run institutions that benefit the whole town while the most affluent parishes continued to charge their parishioners at rates like Charlton Kings (£48), LwWH (£36), Prestbury (£35) or Up Hatherley (£13) which are closer to those of rural parishes.

### **4.10.7 Proposal 6 - C5**

Summary - At the moment there are 5 Parish Councils within the borders of Cheltenham. The aim should be to Parish the rest of Cheltenham. The new Parishes should be no bigger than today's Charlton Kings PC but reflect the boundaries of the new unitary authority wards. Today's parish Councils may have to have their boundaries tweaked to reflect this.

Today we have an unofficial grouping of the Parish Councils called C5. This grouping is where the 5 Parish Councils talk together on subjects of joint interest.

With the new unitary structure C5 (as was but renamed) should be put on a formal basis and have a part time Clerk. The Parish Councils of Cheltenham will have many Parish Councillors on the ground and will be experts on what is happening in their area, while the Unitary authority will have only perhaps 100 Councillors in the whole of Gloucestershire. With the boundaries aligned Unitary Councillors will have the opportunity to report back to their Parish Council. The mission of the new C5 structure is to exchange views and ideas on subjects of joint interest and inform the new unitary Council of the views of Cheltenham residents on important topics of the day when required. The aim is to not to reproduce CBC structures.

## **5. Recommendations**

1. To complete a full review of the boundaries of Swindon Village Parish and Prestbury Parish, including Wyman's Brook to establish which Parish it should sit in
  - a. Why – this was recommended as part of one of the more detailed proposals that was provided in the consultation, furthermore a number of survey responses mention Wyman's Brook.
2. To complete a full review of the unparished area between Prestbury and Charlton Kings to understand if it should be incorporated into one of the already established councils

- a. Why – this was recommended in two of the more detailed proposals in response to the consultation.
- 3. To consider setting up a new Parish for Benhall and The Reddings
  - a. Why – this was a key focus of a number of survey responses and was also suggested in one detailed proposal that focused on the Town council, but made other recommendations
- 4. To directly ask the public, in stage 2 of the CGR, if they would like to see a Town Council in Cheltenham. This consultation question would provide an overview of what a Town Council could be responsible for and provide some options as to its boundaries.
  - a. Why – the development of a Town Council was suggested by a number of respondents to the survey, and a more detailed proposal was also provided

### **Considerations that were given but recommendations will not be made:**

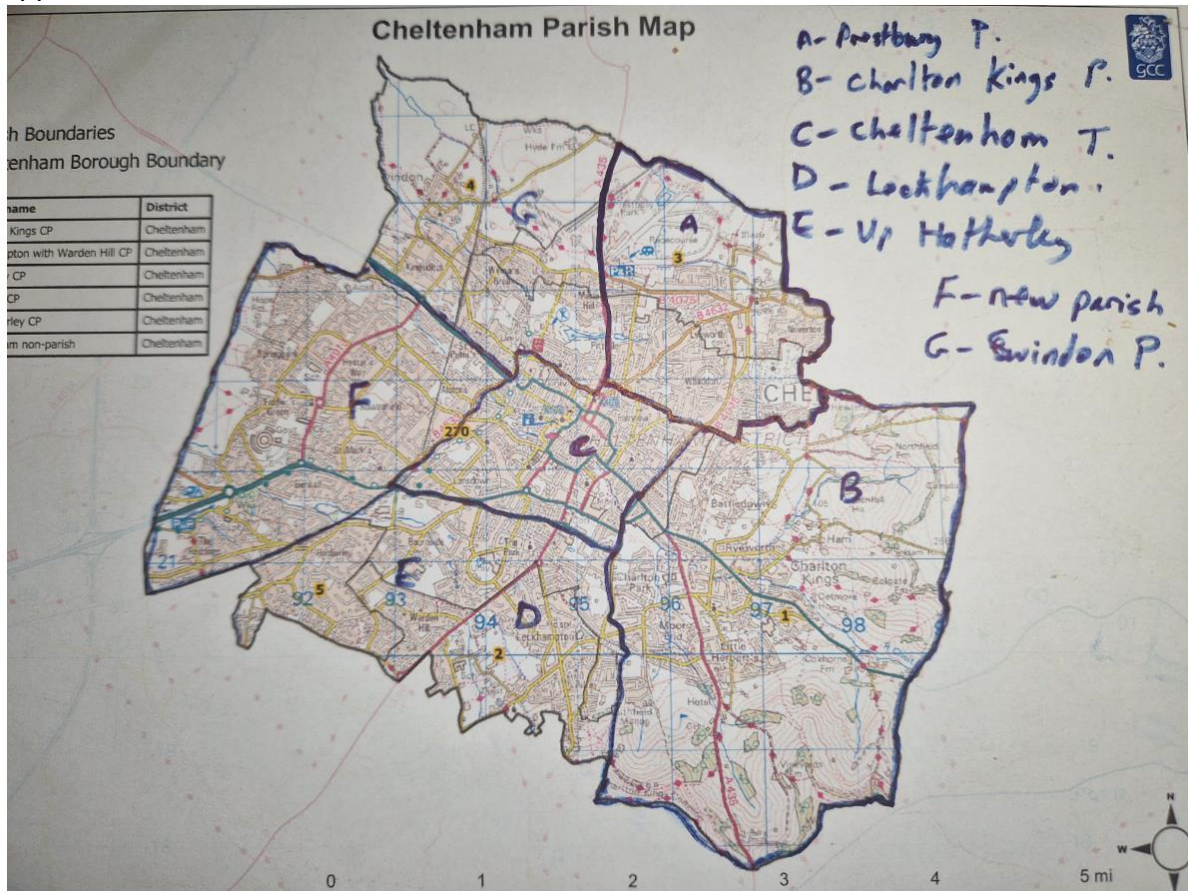
- 5. Some proposals mentioned reviewing the external boundaries of Cheltenham Borough – This CGR cannot consider putting forward any recommendations regarding a boundary that crosses into another district council. Specifically, a number of proposals and survey answers referenced a single Parish for Elms Park, as this location crosses the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury boundaries, this is not currently possible. However, in the future when any new unitary is established, it is possible that a further review could be carried out which would consider district council boundaries.
- 6. Councillor numbers – Depending on the results of Stage 2 of the CGR, if it is agreed that a new local council (Town or Parish) will be established, or a current Parish Council expanded, then there will need to be a recommendation for the number of councillors to be increased relative to the size of that Council.

## **6. Next steps**

6.1 Once this report has been reviewed by Full Council, the recommendations will form the basis of a secondary survey. This survey will be more specific and ask communities of Cheltenham to consider if they believe these recommendations should be approved.

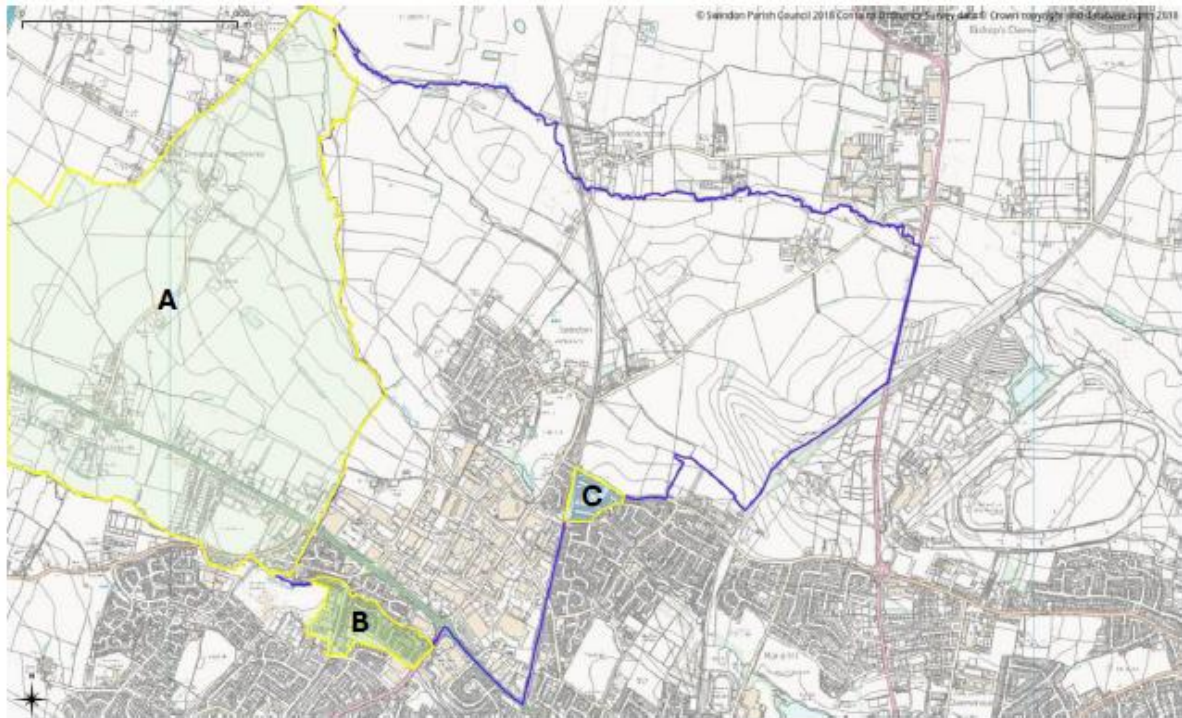
## 7. Appendix

### Appendix A



### Appendix B









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## **Cheltenham Borough Council**

### **Council – 13 October 2025**

#### **Interim review of polling districts, polling places, and polling station for St Mark's Ward**

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**Accountable member:**

Councillor Peter Jeffries, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets

**Accountable officer:**

Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive

**Ward(s) affected:**

St Mark's Ward

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**Key Decision:** No**Executive summary:**

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and to ensure that the polling stations are accessible to all electors including those with special needs.

A consultation exercise has been completed, and consideration has been given to the views put forward.

**Recommendations:**

1. Council approves: -
    - To change the polling place / station for electors in polling district OA to vote at The Common Ground, Cheltenham, Brooklyn Road (formerly St Marks & Hesters Way Community Association).
-

## **1. Implications**

### **1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications**

There are no financial implications as result of changing polling stations.

**Signed off by:** Jon Whitlock Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer),  
jon.whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk

### **1.2 Legal implications**

The council has a statutory duty to review its polling districts, polling places and polling stations. The council must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances. The council must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.

**Signed off by:** One Legal – legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

### **1.3 Environmental and climate change implications**

As the changes suggested are ensuring there is increased accessibility for electors to travel to polling stations, this has a positive environmental implication, reducing barriers to sustainable and active travel when voting within the borough.

**Signed off by:** Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

### **1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities: Securing our future

- Reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes
- Taking care of your money

### **1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

Both polling stations have been reviewed and assessed to ensure that they are as accessible as possible to all electors.

---

## **2 Background**

2.1 A full review of polling districts, places, and stations was conducted in 2024. The function room at the Umbrella public house was designated as the polling place/station for polling district OA. However, following concerns from councillors and the location being outside St Mark's Ward, it was necessary to identify a

suitable alternative within the ward.

### **3 Reasons for recommendations**

3.1 To ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and that polling stations are accessible to all electors.

3.2 The venue is a well-known location with plenty of parking.

### **4 Alternative options considered**

4.1 Two other venues were considered as set out in the paragraphs below.

4.2 St Mark's Church Hall, Church Road

This venue was proposed by the Returning Officer. However, feedback received during the consultation highlighted concerns regarding accessibility, particularly due to limited general and disabled parking provision.

4.3 Rowanfield Community Hub, Rowanfield Junior School, Alstone Lane

This venue was assessed but deemed unsuitable, as the entrance door did not meet the required width for accessibility.

### **5 Consultation and feedback**

5.1 A consultation was carried out and proposals and comments on the review were requested from the following:

- Member of Parliament for Cheltenham
- Borough Councillors for St Mark's Ward
- County Councillor for St Mark's and St Peter's Electoral Division
- Local Political Parties
- Hesters Way and Cheltenham Libraries
- Community Associations within the area
- Disability Groups
- Religious Organisations within the ward

5.2 Following the closure of the consultation period for the review, in addition to formal comments for the Parliamentary Returning Officer for Cheltenham constituency (see paragraph 5.8 below) correspondence was received from six other sources.

5.3 Councillor Richard Pineger highlighted the need for a more cohesive and practical approach to polling arrangements in St Mark's Ward. While the proposal to use St Marks Church Hall is potentially viable, he raised concerns about limited parking, and the additional costs associated with introducing a separate venue. He noted that the ward previously operated with two polling

locations the one being The Common Ground, Cheltenham, (formerly St Marks & Hesters Way Community Association). He recommended consolidating polling at The Common Ground (formerly St Mark's & Hesters Way Community Association) a centrally located venue, to improve accessibility and reduce voter confusion.

5.4 Cheltenham Labour Party expressed significant reservations about the proposal to use St Mark's Church Hall citing limited on-street and disabled parking. They also raised concerns about the venue's location, suggesting it may negatively impact on voter turnout, particularly for electors living furthest from the site who may lack access to private transport. They proposed using The Common Ground, Cheltenham, (the former St Marks & Hesters Way Community Association) for both polling districts OA and OB given its central location within the ward and better accessibility.

5.5 Councillor Sandra Holliday supported the proposal for St Mark's Church Hall but suggested that polling district OA would be better served by moving to The Common Ground (formerly St Marks & Hesters Way Community Association). She noted that the venue is more centrally located, has parking and will help reduce voter confusion.

5.6 Councillor David Willingham supported the move to St Mark's Church Hall, but emphasised that, if implemented, the polling district boundaries should be re-drawn to form a more sensible split between the two polling districts.

5.7 Two additional comments were received from electors within the ward. One recommended using The Common Ground, (formerly St Marks & Hesters Way Community Association) for both polling districts OA and OB citing its central location. The other raised concerns about the proposal of St Mark's Church Hall, noting not centrally located within polling district OA, limited parking (including only one disabled space), and poor proximity to the R bus route. The elector suggested The Common Ground, (formerly St Marks & Hesters Way Community Association) be the polling place for polling district OA as well as polling district OB, highlighting its off-street parking, accessibility to those with disabilities, proximity to public transport and central location within the ward.

5.8 Comments from the Acting Returning Officer (ARO) for Cheltenham constituency are set out in appendix iii.

## **6 Key risks**

6.1 Electors in polling district OA unsure of the location of their polling station.

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**Report author:**

Kim Smith, Electoral Services Manager, kim.smith@cheltenham.gov.uk

**Appendices:**

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment
- iii. ARO comments
- iv. St Mark's Ward list of polling districts, places and stations for publication
- v. Map of St Mark's Ward detailing polling districts and polling stations

**Background information:**

N/A

**Appendix 1: Risk Assessment**

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	If the polling district or polling station changes, electors may be unsure of location of polling station.	RO	2	3	6	Reduce	<p>Poll card with note highlighting that the polling station has changed. Helpline and contact details included on the poll card. Poll cards are delivered at least four weeks before an election</p> <p>Press and social media releases to inform residents to check their poll card and that their polling station may have changed</p> <p>Poll card to include a link to election webpage and 'Find my polling station'</p>	Electoral Services Manager	March / April 2026

## Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Kim smith	Service Area: Electoral Services
Title: Electoral Services Manager	Date of assessment: 7 August 2025
Signature: Kim Smith	

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Other

If other, please specify: Interim review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

Is this new or existing?

**Already exists  
and is being  
reviewed**

**Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project**

**Interim review undertaken to appoint suitable polling place for polling district OA**

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

For Council to approve the recommendations in the report.

Objectives:

To ensure that every polling place within the Borough is accessible to all electors, with particular consideration given to the needs of disabled individuals.

Outcomes:	All polling places have been assessed to ensure that they meet the accessibility requirements.
Benefits:	All electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	<b>No</b>
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	<b>No impact expected</b>
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
The changes that have been recommended should make the polling places more convenient for the electors.	

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	<b>No</b>
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	

**Please move on to Stage 2 if required ([intranet link](#)).**





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Polling District	Constituency	County Division	Parish / Parish Ward	Polling Places (and current stations)	Accessibility	(Acting) Returning Officer Comments	Recommendation
St Mark's Ward							
OA	Cheltenham	St Mark's and St Peter's		The Umbrella, Orchard Way, GL51 7LD	✓	The Umbrella was appointed as polling station for the elections held on 1 May 2025. Elected members aired concerns that the venue was not suitable as it is situated outside of the polling district and ward and that an alternative polling place be sought for future elections. Propose to change the polling place and station to St Mark's Church Hall, Church Road, GL51 7AL. The venue is situated within the polling district and is easily accessible to voters.	Change the polling place and station to: St Mark's Church Hall Church Road, GL51 7AL
OB	Cheltenham	St Mark's and St Peter's		St Marks & H W Community Centre, Brooklyn Road GL51 8DS	✓	St Marks & H W Community Centre is located within the polling district and is well known and convenient for electors.	No changes proposed

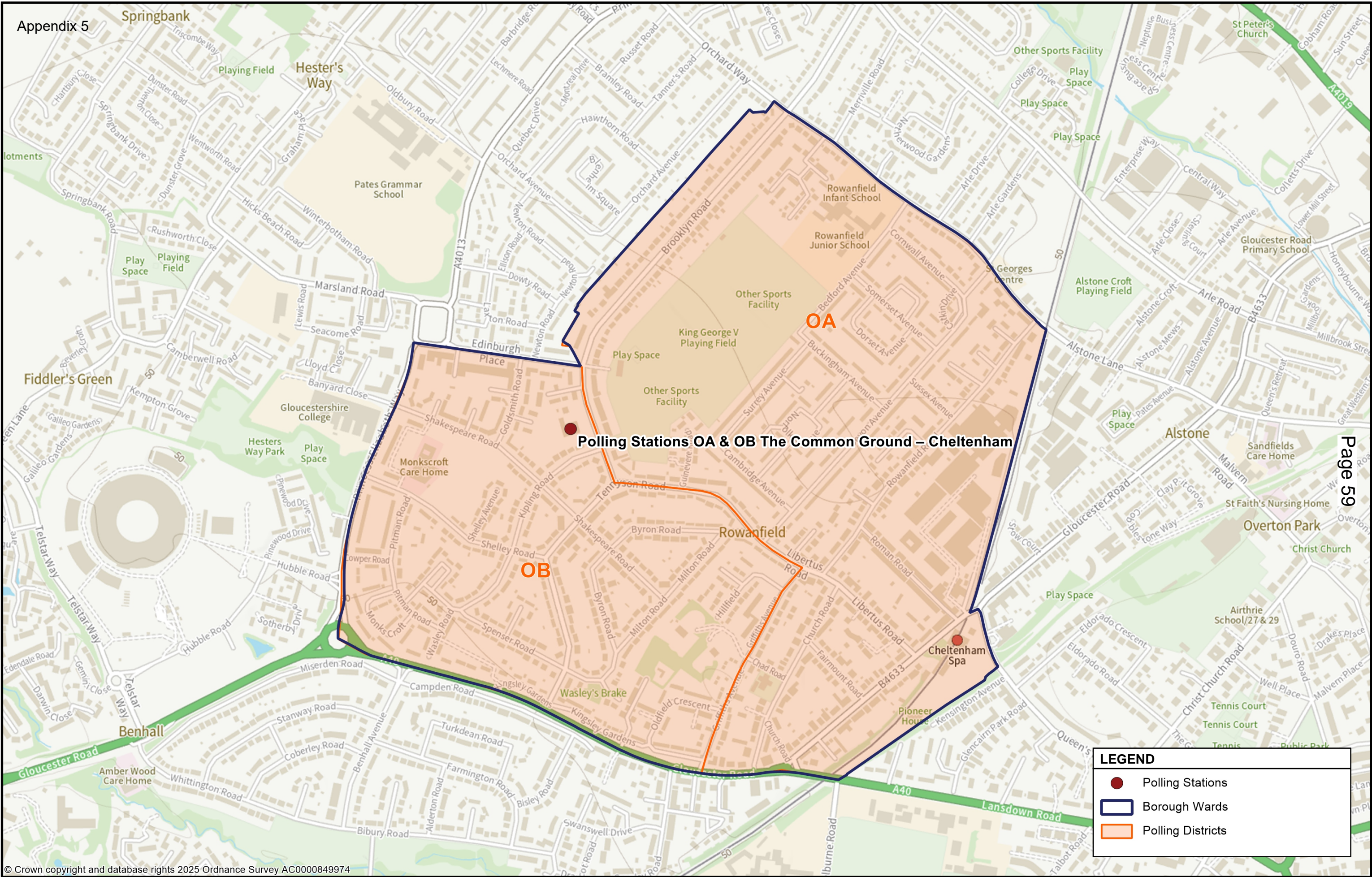
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**Cheltenham Parliamentary Constituency**  
**Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**  
**For St Mark's Ward**  
**1 December 2025**

St Mark's	OA	The Common Ground – Cheltenham Brooklyn Road GL51 8DS
St Mark's	OB	The Common Ground – Cheltenham Brooklyn Road GL51 8DS

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## Cheltenham Borough Council

### Council – 13 October 2025

## Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel

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#### **Accountable member:**

Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Graham Russell

#### **Accountable officer:**

Director of Governance, Housing and Communities (Monitoring Officer), Claire Hughes

#### **Ward(s) affected:**

Not applicable

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**Key Decision:** No

#### **Executive summary:**

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) met on the 22 September 2025 and reviewed the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee. They also considered the allowances for co-optees on Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee.

The Council is now required to consider the recommendations of the IRP. If the Council rejects the recommendation, the status quo will prevail.

#### **IRP Recommendations:**

- 1. That the Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee be awarded a Special Responsibility Allowance of £5,363, to be backdated to the 1 October 2025.**
- 2. That the Vice Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee be awarded a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,823, to be backdated to the 1 October 2025.**

### **3. That the allowances for co-optees/independent persons are noted.**

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#### **1. Implications**

##### **1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications**

The financial implications of the increases in member allowances will be included in the revised budget proposals for 2025/26. There are no property implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**Signed off by:** Jon Whitlock, Head Of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)

##### **1.2 Legal implications**

When setting its Members' Allowances levels, the Council is required, under Regulation 19 of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel that is established for the purpose of reviewing and providing advice on the council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

**Signed off by:** One Legal – [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

##### **1.3 Environmental and climate change implications**

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

**Signed off by:** Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, [maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk)

##### **1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities: Securing our future

- Reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes
- Taking care of your money

##### **1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

Please see the equality impact screening assessment in Appendix 2.

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## 2 Background

### Cabinet Housing Committee Appointments

- 2.1 Following the [Cabinet decision in October 2023](#) to wind-up Cheltenham Borough Homes and to re-integrate housing services under Cheltenham Borough Council, Cabinet approved the creation of a new governance structure on the 11 June 2024 including the establishment of a Cabinet Housing Committee.
- 2.2 The new structure established effective and robust governance and set a framework that will help to facilitate and create ways in which our residents can play an essential part in helping to shape CBC's housing service. In addition, it provides the mechanism by which elected members can provide strong governance and understanding of our housing services and facilitates a link between the council and its tenants and leaseholders. The Committee has co-opted two tenant representatives and one leaseholder representative.
- 2.3 The Cabinet Housing Committee met for the first time on the 25 September 2024 and appointed the Chair and Vice Chair.
- 2.4 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are paid in addition to the basic allowance received by all Members to those Members who hold positions with significant responsibilities over and above the general duties of a councillor, such as chairing of meetings.
- 2.5 As this was a newly developing committee working within a changing regulatory landscape, the IRP set the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chair and Vice Chair in line with that paid to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (£4497 and £1563 respectively). Recognising that the workload may differ from what was anticipated, the IRP recommended that this be reviewed after 12 months of operational experience.
- 2.6 At its meeting on 22 September, the IRP invited the Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee to provide deeper insight into the role, having been active for a year, and used the opportunity to assess the scope of responsibilities, required knowledge and time commitment associated with the position.
- 2.7 In recognition of this, and after careful consideration, the IRP recommended that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee should be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance on par with the amount paid to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning and Licensing Committees, namely £5363 and £1823 respectively, to be backdated to 01 October 2025.

### Independent Person/Co-optee Appointments

2.8 In June 2025, the council advertised and subsequently appointed independent persons/co-optees to the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee (ACG) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S). A nominal annual allowance of £397 is paid for the independent role on ACG, and £250 for the role on O&S. These amounts align with the allowances previously granted to Independent Members of the Standards Committee and members of the Independent Remuneration Panel, respectively.

2.9 On further reflection, given the significant expertise required in financial management, audit, risk oversight, and governance for the ACG co-optee, it is now proposed that the annual allowance for that role should be increased from £397 to £500. This adjustment brings the payment in line with those offered to co-optees serving on equivalent committees in neighbouring authorities.

2.10 In light of the council's approach to nominal allowances for co-optees, it is also felt appropriate to consider the contributions of tenant and leaseholder representatives on the Cabinet Housing Committee. A nominal annual allowance of £250 is proposed for these representatives.

### **3 Reasons for recommendations**

3.1 The proposed changes to all Member and co-optee allowances are outlined in Appendix iv.

3.2 The recommendations proposed are considered to establish a consistent framework for awarding allowances that appropriately recognises individuals who dedicate their time to fulfilling the functions of the authority, as well as any specialist knowledge required in undertaking their roles. The approach ensures fairness, transparency, and parity across all roles, reinforcing the value placed on voluntary and co-opted contributions.

### **4 Alternative options considered**

4.1 Consideration was given to maintaining the current Special Responsibility Allowance for Cabinet Housing Committee. However, it was felt that the role of Chair and Vice Chair of Cabinet Housing Committee more closely aligned with that of Chair and Vice Chair of regulatory committees.

### **5 Consultation and feedback**

5.1 Director of Governance, Housing and Communities, Finance Officers

### **6 Key risks**

6.1 Key risks are identified in the risk register attached at Appendix i.

**Report author:**

Bev Thomas, Democratic Services Team Leader, bev.thomas@cheltenham.gov.uk

**Appendices:**

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening –
- iii. Role Profile – Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee
- iv. Proposed changes to Member Allowances

**Background information:**

[Council – 16 December 2024 -Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel \(IRP\) regarding Members' Scheme of Allowances](#)

[Council – 11 December 2023 – Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel \(IRP\) regarding Members' Scheme of Allowances](#)

[Cabinet – 11 June 2024 – Housing Transition Governance Arrangements](#)

**Appendix i: Risk Assessment**

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
1	If some provision is not made for increasing the basic allowance and SRAs then new councillors may not be attracted to stand for the role or existing members may step down.	Chief Exec	3	2	6	Reduce	The views of existing Councillors should continue to be fed back to the IRP and they should be made aware of any difficulties in attracting future councillors	Director of Governance, Housing and Communities	Ongoing
2	If Members Allowances are increased there is a risk that public perception will be that councillors are receiving an increase during financially challenging times.	Chief Exec	2	2	4	Accept	Recent increases in basic and special responsibility allowances have been based on the average mean officer salary increase, weighted by full time equivalent and as detailed in the report.  Members can forgo any element of their allowance should they wish to do so.	Director of Governance, Housing and Communities	n/a
	If the council does not have a governance structure that is fit for	Director of Governance, Housing and	4	4	16	Reduce	Review the structure after 12 months of	Director of Governance, Housing and	July 2025

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
3	purpose, then it may not fulfil its statutory requirements in relation to the Housing Regulations	Communities					operation	Communities	
4	If the council does not have a governance structure that is fit for purpose then it may result in an inability to identify areas of failure and areas of improvement	Director of Governance, Housing and Communities	4	4	16	Reduce	Review the structure after 12 months of operation	Director of Governance, Housing and Communities	July 2025

## Appendix ii: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

Page 68

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Bev Thomas

Service Area: Democratic Services

Title: Democracy Officer

Date of assessment: 22/09/2025

Signature: *B Thomas*

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Function

If other, please specify:

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Review of Member's Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee.

Is this new or existing?

Is changing

#### Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

The Independent Remuneration Panel have reviewed the allowance for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Cabinet Housing Committee after one year in operation.

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

To ensure that councillor roles continue to attract and retain suitable candidates and provide effective governance.

Objectives:

To ensure that councillor roles continue to attract and retain suitable candidates and provide effective governance.

Outcomes:

To ensure that councillor roles continue to attract and retain suitable candidates and provide effective governance.



Benefits:	Ensures that councillor roles continue to attract and retain suitable candidates to provide effective governance.

e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	<b>Yes</b>
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	<b>Positive</b>
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
Increase in allowance payments have a positive impact on councillors.	

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	<b>No</b>
Owner of Stage Two assessment	<b>n/a</b>
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	<b>n/a</b>

## Appendix iii: Cabinet Housing Committee Chair Role Profile

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<b>Role Profile:</b>	Chair of Housing Cabinet Committee
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Cheltenham Borough Council and the local people
<b>Role purpose:</b>	To ensure that the housing regulatory responsibilities of the Council are undertaken in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities – *in addition to those duties of all elected members***

1. To chair meetings of the Housing Cabinet Committee in accordance with the relevant terms of reference and the Council's Standing Orders and Constitution.
2. To consider the submission of late items and to determine whether or not these are sufficiently urgent to be considered by the Committee.
3. To arrange proper consideration of the issues presented to the Committee and ensure that it has all the necessary information before it to make informed decisions.
4. To refer matters to cabinet for decision or action as required
5. To represent tenants and leaseholders and ensure that they live in safe, high quality homes
6. To represent the Council during inspections from the Regulator of Social Housing
7. To maintain awareness of national and local issues and regulations relating to Housing.
8. To liaise with officers as to the training and development requirements for committee members.
9. To lead the Committee in its role in reviewing, assessing and understanding the council's management of its housing stock, including property compliance and health and safety
10. To lead the Committee in its role in monitoring performance and delivery of the consumer standard including the new tenancy satisfaction measures.
11. To lead the Committee in its consideration of complaints data
12. To provide strong and effective connectivity between the Council and the Tenant and Leaseholder Panels

**Appendix iv: PROPOSED CHANGES TO MEMBERS ALLOWANCES (highlighted and with effect from 1 October 2025)**

<b>ROLE</b>	<b>ALLOWANCES</b>
Councillor – Basic Allowance	6,844
<b>Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)</b>	
Leader	21,789
Deputy Leader	19,307
Cabinet Member	18,388
Chair of Planning Committee	5,363
Vice-Chair of Planning Committee	1,823
Chair of Licensing Committee	5,363
Vice-Chair of Licensing Committee	1,823
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4,597
Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1,563
<b>** Proposed increase in allowance : Chair of Cabinet Housing Committee</b>	<b>5,363 (currently 4,597)</b>
<b>** Proposed increase in allowance : Vice-Chair of Cabinet Housing Committee</b>	<b>1,823 (currently 1,563)</b>
Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee (now incorporates Standards)	1,839
Chair of Appointments and Remuneration Committee	409
Group Leaders	817

ROLE	ALLOWANCES
Mayor (Chair of Council)	613
Mayor (Duties of Civic Head)	8,173
Deputy Mayor	1,587
Independent Remuneration Panel Members	250
** Proposed increase in Allowance -Independent Members of Audit, Compliance and Governance (including Standards)	500 (currently 397)
Co-opted Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	250
** Proposed New Allowance - Tenant, Leaseholder and shared ownership representatives on Cabinet Housing Committe	250

**Cheltenham Borough Council****Council – 13 October 2025****Audit, Compliance and Governance Annual Report  
May 2024-April 25**

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**Accountable member:**

Councillor Adrian Bamford, Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee

**Accountable officer:**

Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)

**Ward(s) affected:**

n/a

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**Key Decision:** No

**Executive summary:**

The Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee provides a broad-based audit role across all areas of the authority, while promoting and ensuring effective internal control and independent assurance mechanisms

The purpose of the Annual Report 2024-25 is to summarise the work undertaken by the committee during the previous municipal year - complying with current best practice for audit committees - and demonstrate that it has fulfilled its terms of reference. Sharing a summary of its activities and achievements serves as a useful reminder of the role of the committee in providing assurance about the council's governance, risk management and financial and business controls.

Members of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee have endorsed the annual report via email and welcome the opportunity for Council to consider the report and give its views on the success or otherwise of the audit arrangements.

**Recommendation: That Council:**

- **notes the Audit, Compliance and Governance Annual Report 2024-25**

## **1. Implications**

### **1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications**

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

**Signed off by:** Jon Whitlock – Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)  
[jon.whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:jon.whitlock@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.2 Legal implications**

There are no legal implications in relation to the recommendation of this report.

**Signed off by:** One Legal, [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

### **1.3 Environmental and climate change implications**

There are no environmental or climate change implications in relation to this report.

**Signed off by:** Maizy McCann, Climate Officer  
[maizymccann@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:maizymccann@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities: Securing our future

- Reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes
- Taking care of your money

### **1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

No implications – see Appendix 2.

---

## **2 Background**

2.1 Not applicable

## **3 Reasons for recommendations**

3.1 Not applicable

#### **4 Alternative options considered**

4.1 Not applicable

#### **5 Consultation and feedback**

5.1 Not applicable

#### **6 Key risks**

6.1 Not applicable.

---

#### **Report author:**

Judith Baker, Democracy Officer, [judith.baker@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:judith.baker@cheltenham.gov.uk)]

#### **Appendices:**

- i. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening
- ii. Audit, Compliance and Governance Annual Report

#### **Background information:**

None.

#### **Appendices:**

- i. Equality Impact Assessment
- ii. Audit, Compliance and Governance Annual Report

## Appendix i: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Bev Thomas	Service Area:
Title: Democratic Services Team Leader	Date of assessment: 17.09.2025
Signature: B Thomas	

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Function

If other, please specify: Annual Report

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Is this new or existing?	
	Already exists and is being reviewed
Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project	

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	To report to Council on the activities of the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee for 2024-25
-------	--



Objectives:	To enable Members to understand the role of the committee and assess whether it is meeting its objectives
Outcomes:	To add value to the council's programme of work
Benefits:	Cross-party working

e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	No
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	No impact expected
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	No

Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	



**CHELtenham**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee**

# **Annual Report**

**May 2024—April 2025**

# Contents

Foreword . . . . .	3
Introduction . . . . .	4
The Committee . . . . .	5
Highlights of the Year . . . . .	6
Summary of work undertaken	
• External Audit . . . . .	7
• Internal Audit . . . . .	8
• Counter-Fraud and Enforcement . . . . .	9
• Risk Management . . . . .	10
• IT Security . . . . .	10
• Corporate Governance . . . . .	11
• Finance . . . . .	12
• Information Requests . . . . .	12
Training and Development . . . . .	13
Looking Forward . . . . .	14
Contacts . . . . .	15
<hr/>	
Appendix 1:	
Terms of Reference . . . . .	16

## Page 81

# Foreword

### Councillor Adrian Bamford, Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee



As Chair, it is my pleasure to commend the 2024-25 Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee Annual Report. Thank you to all officers involved in its production. The environment and the times in which CBC currently operates are particularly challenging, but the professionalism and dedication of officers, committee members, and our external auditors, have enabled the high standards of governance to continue to be achieved throughout the year.

*Councillor Adrian Bamford*

September 2025

---

## What is an audit committee?

“The purpose of an **audit committee** is to provide to those charged with governance **independent assurance** on the adequacy of the **risk management** framework, the **internal control** environment and the integrity of the **financial reporting** and annual **governance** processes. By overseeing **internal and external audit** it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place.”

*CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police CIPFA, 2018*

## Page 82

# Introduction

The Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee is a core component of the Cheltenham Borough Council's governance structure and is designed to reflect best practice in this area of CBC's organisation. It is constituted by the council to have sufficient authority and resources to fulfil this vital role. The Committee has the right to obtain all the information it considers necessary and to consult directly with senior managers. In line with best practice, the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee can report its observations and any concerns directly to the Council.

A local authority has a duty to ensure that it is fulfilling its responsibilities for adequate and effective internal control, risk management and governance, as well as the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of its activities. The Audit Compliance and Governance Committee has a key role in overseeing and assessing the internal control, risk management and corporate governance arrangements and advising the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.

This role is reflected in the Committee's Terms of Reference for the year in question (2024-25) which are reproduced in Appendix 1 for information. In October 2022, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA\*) published ***Audit Committees – Practical guidance for Local Authorities and Police***, an update of previous guidance from 2018. The guidance includes suggested Terms of Reference for Audit Committees which has been used as the basis for those adopted by CBC



\*CIPFA is the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, a UK-based international accountancy membership and standard-setting body. It believes that improving public services is the key to changing lives for the better and that good public financial management is central to achieving this ambition. Its educational and advisory services support its members, students and other public finance professionals throughout their careers – helping them add value to their teams and the organisations for which they work. Through its work, it helps to ensure public money is raised and spent with the highest degree of openness.

# The Committee


## Members

- Councillor Adrian Bamford (Chair)
- Councillor Ben Orme (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Ashleigh Davies
- Councillor Chris Day
- Councillor Cathal Lynch
- Councillor Julian Tooke
- Councillor David Willingham

## CBC Officer leads:

- Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
- Claire Hughes, Director of Governance, Housing and Communities
- Victoria Bishop, Governance, Risk and Assurance Manager

## Regular attendees:

- Nathan Coughlin, Bishop Fleming – external auditors - reports to every meeting (Peter Barber, Grant Thornton, May-October 2024)
  - Lucy Cater, South-West Audit Partnership (SWAP) – internal auditors – reports to every meeting
  - Emma Cathcart, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit (CFEU) - reports twice a year
  - CBC Governance and Risk Management - reports twice a year
  - CBC Finance Team - reports to every meeting
  - John Chorlton, ICT Security (Publica) – reports once a year, in exempt session
- 

## Highlights of the Year

The committee met four times across the municipal year 2024-25:

- 10 July 2024
- 22 October 2024
- 22 January 2025
- 25 February 2025

There have been many benefits from the work of the committee. The main outcomes and improvements include:

- the timely sign-off of the accounts to the amended timetable;
- an Annual Governance Statement that reflected the developments within the council;
- a positive opinion from the Head of Internal Audit in their Annual Report; and
- a Risk Management process that is embedded within the council

On the pages that follow is a summary of work undertaken in 2024-25.







In 2024, Bishop Fleming was appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) as CBC's external auditor, taking over from Grant Thornton, who had held the role since 2012. The committee must:

- consider and review the external audit and all associated reports and documents;
- monitor and review actions required arising out of external audit recommendations; and
- review all matters relating to external audit.

The government inherited a broken local audit system in England, evidenced by a significant backlog of outstanding unaudited accounts. CBC was not affected as severely as some councils, but in July 2024, the government stated its intention to set a series of statutory backstop dates to clear the backlog and enable the system to recover. Bishop Fleming hopes to be back on track in 2025.

During the year 2024-25, the committee:

- received and considered the audit plan to review the financial statements; and
- received and considered the detailed results of the external auditor's work in relation to the audits for both 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial statements of the council. The committee was pleased to note that the auditors had given a largely favourable commentary within its Annual Reports detailing the Value for Money arrangements.

Due to the backstop arrangements, the council received a disclaimed opinion for both financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. This means that the external auditor was unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to state, in their opinion, whether the financial statements were properly put together and free from material error. Irrespective of the audit process, the council as continued to produce accurate and timely finance reports as part of its internal system control.



Internal auditing is provided by Southwest Audit Partnership (SWAP) Internal Audit Services, a not-for-profit internal audit partnership dedicated to improving the efficiency and productivity of public sector organisations across the southwest and helping them manage their risks. The committee is required to:

- consider the annual internal audit report and opinion;
- monitor the on-going operational audit plan and audit planning process;
- agree internal audit plans; and
- review internal audit performance and monitoring of actions required by audit recommendations.

During the year 2024-25, the committee:

- continued to oversee the internal audit arrangements for the Council. This included approving the review of the Internal Audit Charter which outlines the terms of reference of the department and is aligned to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards;
- received and approved the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023-24. This included the Annual Audit Opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of control, risk management and governance within the Council. The Committee was pleased to receive a positive opinion;
- received and approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2024-25. The plan ensures that internal audit resources are prioritised towards those systems and areas which are considered to be most at risk or which contribute most to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. It is designed to enable the Head of Internal Audit to give an opinion at the end of the year, but is flexible to ensure it remains relevant throughout the year;
- monitored the delivery of the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 through regular update reports presented by the Head of Internal Audit;
- received and considered the results of internal audit work throughout the year;
- monitored the progress made by management during the period to address identified control weaknesses; and
- monitored the performance of the Internal Audit team through the regular update reports.

## Counter Fraud and Enforcement



In conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, the council must ensure that the highest standards of probity and public accountability are demonstrated. This includes counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements, which are provided by the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit (CFEU).

The CFEU is a partnership of councils (Forest of Dean, Cotswold, West Oxfordshire, Tewkesbury, Stroud and Cheltenham) and was formed to mitigate fraud risk and reduce criminal activity and financial loss in each member council's jurisdiction. It provides:

- counter fraud, investigative and criminal enforcement support;
- housing and tenancy fraud prevention and detection services; and
- acts as an in-house support service supplying preventative activities, proactive drives and reactive investigations.

During the year 2024-25, the committee:

- received direct reports detailing activities and results of the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit for 2023-24 and a mid-year update for 2024-25. Activities cover preventative, proactive and reactive work streams;
- agreed the focus areas for work streams in 2024-25 to include grants verification and polygamous working mitigation;
- approved the updated Whistle-Blowing Policy, highlighting key legislation and the roles and responsibilities of Members, officers and other parties; and
- received annual assurance relating to the council's procedures relating to surveillance and the acquisition of communications data.

## Page 88

# Risk Management

Risk management is the culture, process and structure directed towards effective management of potential opportunities and threats to the council achieving its priorities and objectives.

CBC officers are responsible for writing and reviewing the council's risk management strategy with appropriate risk management procedures. The committee is required to:

- ensure that the risk strategy is in place;
- ensure that risk management procedures are carried out satisfactorily, and
- provide on-going monitoring and review of the strategy.

During the year 2024-25, the committee:

- continued to oversee the council's risk management arrangements and strategy, including updates to the strategy and policy in October 2024;
- received a summary of risk management activity during 2024-25; and
- supported the implementation of a new risk management software called Verto to assist with project risks and corporate risks, with a future goal to manage operational risks via that platform too.

## IT Security

# PUBLICA

The council's cyber security is managed by Publica, which provides services to Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Ubico, the Cheltenham Trust and Publica. As part of its overview of risk management, Members of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee receive an annual report from the Chief Technology Officer at Publica, in exempt session.

In January 2025, the committee was updated on various aspects of the team's work, including disaster recovery and annual compliance testing, as well as future risks around AI and Quantum computing. The committee:

- noted the continuing efforts in cyber security over the past 12 months, and had the opportunity to ask questions.

## Corporate Governance

The committee is required to:

- appraise the framework of internal control to provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations;
- ensure arrangements operate to evaluate and report on compliance with the local code of corporate governance with an annual review of the code, and
- review internal and external reports and assessments in respect of corporate governance.

In addition, in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, it must ensure that the highest standards of probity and public accountability are demonstrated. This includes anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements, which are provided by the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit (CFEU).

During the year 2024-25, the committee:

- considered changes to the refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance prior to approval. The Code reflects the core principles and requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework';
- considered the draft and final Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24 on behalf of the council, showing how the council complied with the Local Code of Corporate Governance and highlighting areas of continued progress;
- monitored progress against the Audit, Compliance and Governance action plan; and
- received and considered at each meeting its own forward plan for the year ahead, ensuring that all relevant areas are covered during the year.

The committee is required to:

- review and approve the annual statement of accounts and statement of internal control produced by CBC's finance team;
- consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed; and
- consider whether there are any concerns arising from the financial statements.

During the year 2024-25, the committee:

- considered and approved the audited Statement of Accounts for 2022-23 and 2023-24 on behalf of the Council.

## Information Requests

Cheltenham Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that it meets its legal requirements under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004). The committee is required to:

- consider the Information Requests Annual Report, which details the council's handling of information requests made during the previous year.

At its meeting in July 2024, the committee:

- reviewed the council's performance for 2023-24;
- was reassured that despite an increase in requests and resourcing issues within the council, standards are being maintained; and
- made suggestions as to how some of the issues could be addressed.

## Page 91 Training and Development



### **New Member Induction**

Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee welcomed four newly-elected Members in May 2024 – Councillors Davies, Day, Lynch and Orme – all of whom underwent mandatory training, including fraud training, before their first meeting in July, together with other Members of the committee.



### **Chair's Briefing**

From September 2024, the Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee has met with the Deputy Chief Executive, Paul Jones, in advance of each meeting, to discuss the upcoming agenda items and gain further insight into any issues arising. This has resulted in more informed and effective chairing of the meetings, and is now written into the process



### **Local Enforcement Plan—Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 09 September 2024**

Following concerns arising from internal audit about planning enforcement, Members of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee were invited to join Overview and Scrutiny Committee colleagues at their meeting on 09 September 2024, to pre-scrutinise and contribute to the draft Local Enforcement Plan before it was considered by Cabinet on 26 November 2024. Members shared their many thoughts on all aspects of the council's approach to enforcement, its disappointing record, and its recent struggles with recruitment, and welcomed the officers' suggestion that a summary of points raised at the meeting would be addressed in the Cabinet report.

### **Merger with Standards Committee**

At its meeting on 23 January 2025, the constitution working group considered a proposal to merge the functions of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee and Standards Committee, and appointing Independent Persons to join Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee.

The role of the Standards Committee was to promote and maintain high standards of conduct among Members, and it was supported by two Independent Persons. Since the Standards Committee had not met in full for two years, with only one sub-committee being convened during that time and the national trend towards merging the responsibilities of Audit Committees and Standards Committees, it was considered the appropriate option for CBC, particularly as the impact in terms of workload for Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee would be minimal. The existing chairs of Standards and Audit, Compliance and Governance Committees were supportive of the proposed way forward.

This proposal was subsequently agreed by Full Council in February 2024. It will provide a more streamlined governance structure by allowing one committee to have focused oversight of governance matters, so fitting well within the existing title of the committee. It will also provide some independent assurance to the committee through the addition of Independent Persons.

The terms of reference of the two committees have been combined to form new terms of reference (see Appendix 1) but in practice means that general standards or code of conduct matters, such as updating the code of conduct, will be considered by the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee, and that any standards hearings will take place via a sub-committee which would be drawn from the main committee.

Mr Duncan Chittenden, who acted as the Independent Person on Standards Committee for many years, has since been co-opted to Audit, Compliance and Governance, and attended the July 2025 meeting.



# Contacts

**Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance**

Councillor Adrian Bamford

**Vice-Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance**

Councillor Ben Orme

**Democratic Services Team Leader**

Bev Thomas

**Democracy Officers**

Claire Morris

Judith Baker

Rhian Watts

**Postal address**

Democratic Services

Cheltenham Borough Council

Municipal Offices

The Promenade

Cheltenham

GL50 9SA

**Email**

[democratic.services@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@cheltenham.gov.uk)

**Phone**

01242 264246

## Page 94

# Appendix 1

## Terms of Reference

<b>AUDIT, COMPLIANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (made up of 7 members)</b>
<b>Function</b>
<b>General</b>
Provide a broad-based audit role across all areas of the Authority, while promoting and ensuring effective internal control and independent assurance mechanisms
<b>Internal Audit</b>
Consider the internal audit annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Authority's corporate governance arrangements
Provide on-going monitoring of the operational audit plan and audit planning process
Agree internal audit plans (ensuring that internal audit work is planned with due regard to risk, materiality and supports the attainment of the Authority's aims and priorities)
Review internal audit performance
Monitor and review the actions required arising out of audit recommendations
<b>External Audit</b>
Consider and review the external audit and inspection letter and all associated reports and other documents
Consider and review external audit reports
Monitor and review actions required arising out of external audit recommendations
Contribute to the forward work plan of the Authority's external auditors (insofar as they relate to the Authority)
Review all matters relating to external audit, including audit and inspection planning, action points and reports

Ensure effective liaison between external and internal audit and any other inspection agency
To be consulted on any proposals for the appointment of the council's external auditor
<b>Risk Management</b>
Ensure that an appropriate corporate risk management strategy is in place
Ensure that risk management procedures are satisfactorily carried out
Provide on-going monitoring and review of the risk management strategy
<b>Annual Statement of Accounts</b>
Review and approve the annual statement of accounts and statement of internal control, specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that needs to be brought to the attention of the Authority
Ensure appropriate arrangements operate for the development of the Statement on Internal Control
Review the annual report to members from the external auditor to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the statement of accounts
<b>Corporate Governance Framework</b>
Ensure systematic appraisal of the Authority's control environment and framework of internal control to provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations
In conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, ensure that the highest standards of probity and public accountability are demonstrated including anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements
Ensure arrangements operate to evaluate and report on compliance with the local code of corporate governance and to periodically review the code
Review internal and external reports and assessments in respect of corporate governance

Ensure and maintain effective liaison with the Corporate Governance Group	
<b>Standards</b>	
(a)	<p>To promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to assist Members and Co-opted Members to observe the Code of Conduct and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code;</li> <li>• monitor the operation of the code; and</li> <li>• provide advice and training.</li> </ul>
(b)	<p>To promote and maintain high standards of conduct in Parish Councils and to assist Parish Councils to observe the Code of Conduct, and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advise Parish Councils on the adoption or revision of Codes of Conduct;</li> <li>• monitor the operation of their Codes; and</li> <li>• provide advice and training the Parish Councillors.</li> </ul>
(c)	Determine applications for dispensations which have been made by Members of the Borough Council and which have not been determined by the Monitoring Officer under authority delegated to them.
(d)	Prepare, monitor and review Codes and Protocols to support the Code of Conduct and recommend to Council accordingly.
(e)	Consider reports from the Monitoring Officer on the number of complaints received under the Code of Members' Conduct and the decisions taken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person(s) on such complaints.
(f)	Consider and determine the appropriate action on matters referred by the Monitoring Officer in relation to the assessment of complaints where the Monitoring Officer has been unable to exercise their delegated authority.
(g)	<p>Receive summary reports from the Monitoring Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on complaints that have been investigated where 'no breach' of the Code has been found to have occurred; and</li> <li>• on complaints where a 'breach' of the Code has been found but where it has been possible for a local resolution to be agreed.</li> </ul>
(h)	Adopt procedures for the hearing of cases of a 'breach of the Code' finding upon investigation via a Hearings Sub-Committee

## **Cheltenham Borough Council**

### **Council – 13 October 2025**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report April 2024- March 2025**

---

#### **Accountable member:**

Councillor Tabi Joy, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### **Accountable officer:**

Victoria Bishop, Head of Governance, Risk and Assurance

#### **Ward(s) affected:**

n/a

---

#### **Key Decision:** No

#### **Executive summary:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) manages and coordinates scrutiny at the council, with scrutiny task groups carrying out especially detailed work and reporting back to the main committee.

Under these arrangements, O&S produces an annual report for Council and this is contained in Appendix 2. This report sets out the achievements of scrutiny between April 2024 and May 2025.

O&S endorsed the annual report at their meeting on the 29 October 2025 and welcomes the opportunity for Council to debate this report and give its views on the success or otherwise of the scrutiny arrangements.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1. That the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny 2024-25 is noted.**

---

## 1. Implications

### 1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

There are no direct financial or property implications arising from this report. The annual budget proposals and the scrutiny of financial performance and other budgetary issues are reviewed throughout the year by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, as detailed in the section on Task Groups in the annual Scrutiny report. Likewise, treasury management activity is scrutinised by the Treasury Management Panel and any significant asset management decisions are first presented to the Asset Management Working Group.

**Signed off by:** Ela Jankowska – Finance Business Partner,  
[ela.jankowska@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:ela.jankowska@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### 1.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

**Signed off by:** One Legal; [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

### 1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

There are no environmental or climate change implications to this report.

**Signed off by:** Maizy McCann, Climate Officer [maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### 1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities: Securing our future

- Reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes
- Taking care of your money

### 1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

See screening template Appendix ii.

---

#### Report author:

Bev Thomas, Democratic Services Team Leader

**Appendices:**

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening
- iii. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

**Appendix 1: Risk Assessment**

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
	If any scrutiny arrangements are not supported by a change in culture across Members and officers they may not be successful in delivering the outcomes required	Director of Governance and Customer Services	3	3	9	Reduce	Ensure the opportunity is taken to review scrutiny arrangements and enhance them where necessary.	Member training was held in June 2024.
	If the council cannot dedicate resources to support the scrutiny process then the O&S process will not be fully effective.	Director of Governance and Customer Services	3	2	6	Accept	Optimise the use of existing resources within the scrutiny arrangements.	It is acknowledged that facilitation support from Democratic Services for scrutiny task groups is important and all task groups have been supported. Resources are



Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
								limited across the council so Members will need to carefully prioritise all scrutiny task group reviews to ensure they make optimum use of the resources available.
	If the task groups operate outside of the democratic process, then scrutiny could become disjointed and progress difficult to control and track.	Director of Governance and Customer Services	3	2	6	Accept	Guidance to officers supporting task groups on keeping documentation and reporting back to Dem Services.	See note above. In the past, task groups facilitated by officers outside of democratic services have on occasion been less well documented and more difficult to track progress of. A scrutiny guide

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
								was produced and officers are encouraged to adopt standard procedures and good practice. All task groups in the last 12 months have been supported by Democratic Services.
	If members do not put themselves forward for task groups the workload could be unevenly shared across members and be a source of potential conflict or result in task groups not having the right	Group Leaders	3	3	9	Reduce	Group Leaders to manage, monitor and encourage participation.  Utilise Members' skills.	It is hoped that other members will put themselves forward should a topic of interest arise.

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
	skill mix.							
	If scrutiny does not have any dedicated budget it will be difficult to promote public involvement and engagement	Council	2	3	6	Accept		Scrutiny does not have a dedicated budget but this has not been a significant issue to date, with budget having been allocated to member training this year. It could become an issue if O&S wanted to buy in some outside expertise at any point.
	If O&S does not take an active role in the major change programmes it may lose its opportunity to influence the scrutiny	Chair of O&S	3	2	6	Accept	O&S to include scrutiny of change programmes in its workplan and ensure it is consulted on any	Member seminars continue to be held at appropriate times and the relevant Cabinet Members

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
	arrangements in any new proposed ways of working						future scrutiny arrangements.	have been invited to discuss particular programmes and projects as necessary and additional information can be requested.
	If scrutiny is not carrying out the full extent of its role i.e. pre and post decision scrutiny and overview, there is a risk of a democratic deficit.	Democratic Services	3	2	6	Accept	Ensure new Member and officer induction cover the role of scrutiny.	Member training was undertaken in June as part of the 2024 new member induction after the May elections.

## Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening )

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Bev Thomas	Service Area:
Title: Dem Services Team Leader	Date of assessment: 16/09/25
Signature:	

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Function

If other, please specify: annual report

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Is this new or existing?		Already exists and is being reviewed
Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project		

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	To report to Council on the activities of Overview and Scrutiny for 2024-2025
Objectives:	To enable Members to understand the role of scrutiny and assess whether it is meeting its objectives
Outcomes:	To add value to the council's programme of work

Benefits:	Cross party working

**e. What are the expected impacts?**

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.

**No**

Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?

**Unsure**

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

**f. Identify next steps as appropriate**

Stage Two required	<b>No</b>
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	



**CHEL TENHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

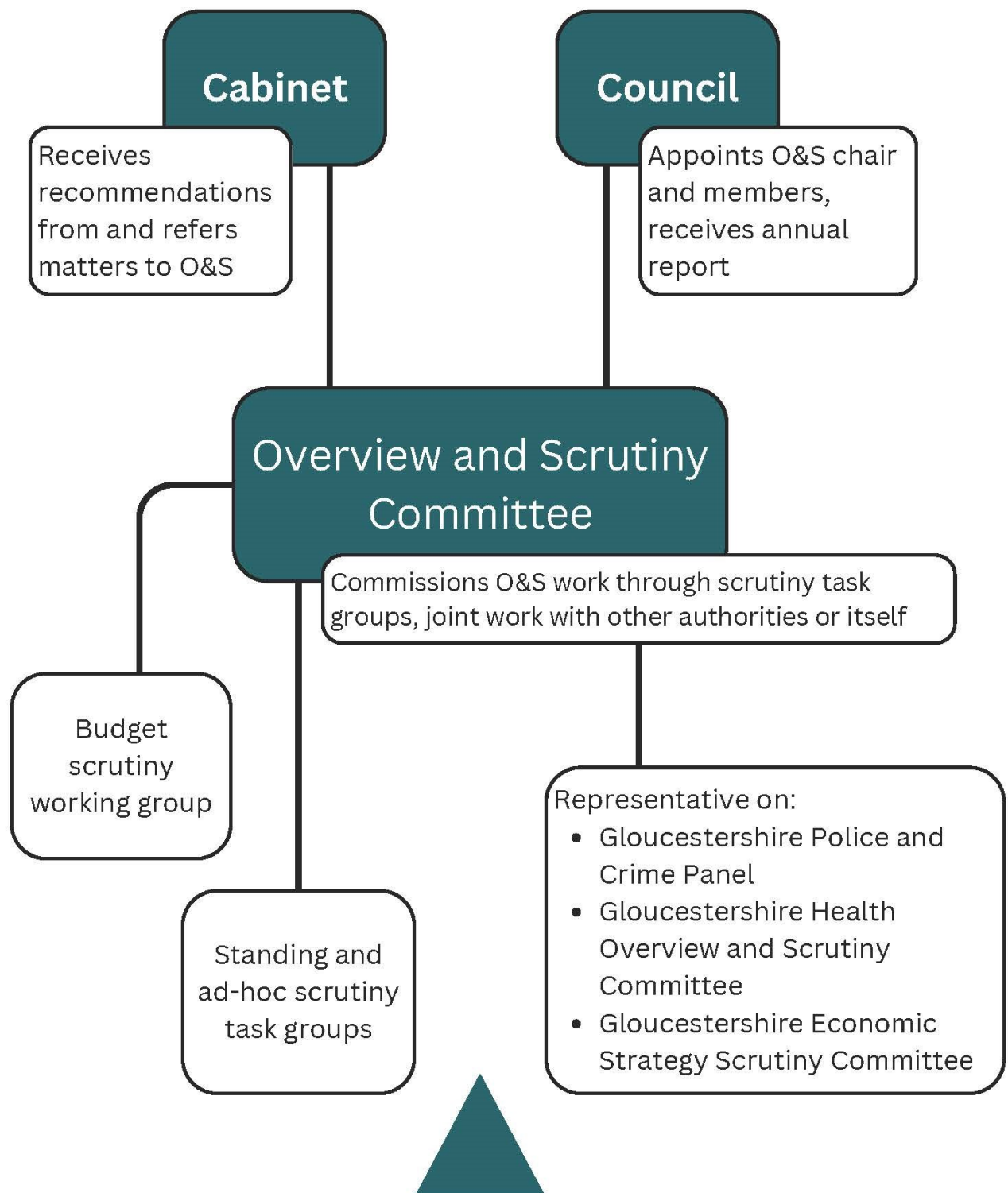
**DRAFT Overview and Scrutiny**

# **Annual Report**

**April 2024—March 2025**

# Overview and Scrutiny Structure Chart

Page 108



All members are supported by member training, seminars, briefings where appropriate and by Democratic Services Officers



## Page 109

# Foreword

**Councillor Tabi Joy, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny**

**Councillor Jackie Chelin, Vice-Chair**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has had another busy year with an ambitious agenda set by its members at a planning meeting facilitated by the new Governance, Risk and Assurance Manager.

Thanks go to all the officers who have brought their expertise and given their time in preparing and presenting papers for the committee and in answering fully committee members' challenging questions. The committee is also immensely grateful for the work of the Democratic Services team who organise and liaise with all parties to ensure that the items discussed meet the objectives set.

At the committee's request, the cabinet member with responsibility for refuse and recycling has been attending the meetings on a regular basis to answer questions on the closure of the HRC and the measures being put in place to assess the impact.

The committee has also been pleased to receive regular reports from borough councillors who sit on Gloucester County Council's three scrutiny groups for Health, Economic Development, and the Police and Crime Panel. The Borough Council's Budget Scrutiny Group, and the more recently established Scrutiny Task Group for Housing Transition, have also provided timely updates.

During the year, key business of the committee has involved scrutiny of the Ubico environmental services company, the local enforcement plan, the draft grants policy, the biodiversity duty report, the Golden Valley social value strategy and the collections development policy. There have been updates on the Tackling Multiple Deprivation work and the air quality strategy as well as progress on implementation of recommendations from the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review on planning. The committee was briefed on the barriers to affordable housing delivery, the challenges of reconciling heritage protection with sustainability measures, and the evolving situation with local government reorganisation.

This annual report provides an insight into the focus of each meeting. In so doing, it demonstrates clearly the depth and breadth of the council's commitment to its local community combined with a strong desire to ensure accountability and to deliver positive outcomes for all its residents.

# The Committee

## 2024-25

### Members

- Councillor Tabi Joy (Chair)
- Councillor Jackie Chelin (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Frank Allen
- Councillor Dilys Barrell
- Councillor Graham Beale
- Councillor Julia Chandler
- Councillor Chris Day
- Councillor Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp
- Councillor Sandra Holliday
- Councillor Richard Pineger
- Councillor Stan Smith

### CBC Officer leads:

- Claire Hughes, Director of Governance, Housing and Communities
- Victoria Bishop, Governance, Risk and Assurance Manager

### Meetings

The Committee met six times across the municipal year 2024-25:

- 09 September
- 21 October
- 25 November
- 13 January
- 24 February
- 31 March

# Budget Scrutiny Working Group

**Councillor Adrian Bamford**

## **Chair of Budget Scrutiny Working Group**

The aim of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group (BSWG) is to monitor council spending throughout the year as well as to examine incoming budget proposals. It is a good opportunity for non-Cabinet members of CBC to provide an independent review and feed in ideas on budgetary measures and responses to external pressures on CBC operations as a whole.

As part of the BSWG's oversight, in the last year the group examined and commented on the 2025-26 Housing Revenue Account budget proposals, on General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2025-26, and the CBC Financial Out-Turn Report 2023-24. They also received a presentation on the Ubico budget and an update on the savings programme.

Despite the unprecedented financial challenges of the last few years, including the rising costs of service delivery and supporting people hit by the cost-of-living crisis, the 2024-25 budget has seen favourable movement with £385k recurring savings achieved through the senior leadership restructure following the transition of Cheltenham Borough Homes to the 'in-house' provision of CBC Housing Services.

The additional budgeted savings are currently being identified. The 2025-26 budget is forecasted to make a £2m contribution to general balances and reserves, marking the first time in five years that required savings will be outstripped by contributions. Whilst the wider financial landscape remains challenging, the council is in a strong position with a clear roadmap for recovery and revitalisation.

# Scrutiny Task Group

## Cheltenham Borough Homes to Cheltenham Borough Council Transition

The Scrutiny Task Group Housing Transition was established in 2023 and presented its formal final report to O&S in September 2024. The members of the task group were Councillors Paul Baker, Adrian Bamford, Suzanne Williams, former Councillors Wendy Flynn and Emma Nelson, and the co-optee, Ian Mason.

The group had received and commented on the housing integration action plan, actively contributed to the creation of a consultation framework to develop a Tenant Offer and considered the development of the future governance framework. During its time in operation the Task Group regularly updated O&S on its work.

The Leader thanked the task group for its report and proposed a follow-up review in a year and stressed shared responsibility for tackling Anti Social Behaviour which had been highlighted in the report. Emphasis was placed on community-based staff to identify issues early and support local interventions.

The Cabinet Housing Committee held its inaugural meeting in September 2024 as part of the new housing governance arrangements. It is responsible for overseeing the council's housing stock which includes the reviewing of the performance of all housing functions and the engagement of residents in the effective delivery of services. Tenants and a Leaseholder serve as co-optees on the Committee and represent the Committee on Tenant and Leaseholder Panels, to ensure the voices of tenants and leaseholders are strongly heard. The Committee has met seven times in the last year. As an advisory committee it has no decision-making powers of its own but it has made recommendations to the Cabinet on matters relating to the discharge of the housing functions, insofar as those functions relate to the council's housing stock.

## Tackling Multiple Deprivation—Progress Report

The Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships presented a report to O&S in October, reflecting on progress on actions since its last review in June 2023. He provided an update on ongoing challenges facing Cheltenham's communities, including persistent cost-of-living pressures, child poverty, and health inequalities. The report highlighted concerns around youth safety, school attendance, and the rise in home schooling. It also showcased strong partnership work, particularly through the No Child Left Behind initiative, and reaffirmed the council's role in coordinating support across sectors. Members stressed the importance of continued collaboration, data-driven evaluation, and addressing misconceptions about the town's affluence. Further school attendance data will be shared to inform future discussions.



# Other scrutiny

The committee scrutinised a number of key topics throughout the year, in addition to standard items, briefings from the Leader of the Council on key issues, and regular updates from task groups and representatives on county-wide scrutiny groups [Health Overview and Scrutiny, Police and Crime Panel, and Economic Growth Scrutiny]

## Ubico

UBICO, the council's jointly owned environmental services local authority company, presented its annual report to O&S in **September**. It highlighted improvements in safety, reporting, carbon reduction, and operational efficiency. Waste volumes showed a slight drop in general waste and a rise in garden waste and fly-tipping, likely to be due (respectively) to the reduced household recycling hours and better public awareness. Members were able to ask why sickness absence has increased; this is a national trend and Ubico informed that it had appointed a Head of People to support staff and workforce planning. UBICO is refining its workforce strategy to support career development through competency frameworks.

## Local Enforcement Plan

O&S reviewed the draft Local Enforcement Plan in **September**, prior to Cabinet consideration, together with Members of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee. The plan, outlined the council's approach to planning enforcement, including priorities, timescales, and procedures. Members raised concerns about the need for stronger deterrents, proactive monitoring, and clearer responsibilities for listed buildings and derelict land. Officers explained that enforcement is largely reactive due to resource constraints and focused on remedial action. A section on the public interest test was added and further feedback from the O&S committee informed the final version prior to Cabinet consideration.

## Progress report: 2023 Planning Peer Review

The Head of Development Management presented a progress update in **September** on the 12 key recommendations from the recent LGA peer review and improvements introduced since his appointment. The service continues to enhance public engagement, to empower communities and reduce pressure on council resources, particularly in responding to planning breaches. Two emerging neighbourhood plans may serve as models for best practice, and greater promotion of the weekly planning list is encouraged to support local involvement. The planning team has worked closely with HR to adopt a flexible and proactive approach to recruitment, and the service is also investing in long-term workforce development through apprenticeships, graduate-focused career pathways, and potential partnerships with educational institutions to strengthen its "grow your own" strategy.

## Gloucestershire Airport

In **Septer**Page 115 was reported to O&S that the Leader and the Chair of O&S had been approached to attend a scrutiny meeting with Gloucester City Council about the sale of Gloucestershire Airport. A joint scrutiny committee was proposed since Gloucester City and Cheltenham Borough are joint shareholders. This work was delayed in 2024/2025 due to various factors, including the local elections.

## Grants Policy

Members were given the opportunity to consider the draft grants policy in **October**, prior to Cabinet consideration in November. The Director of Governance and Customer Service explained that the new Grants Policy aimed at strengthening oversight and transparency in the distribution of community funding. Key highlights included a commitment to robust governance and accountability for public funds, introduction of a grant toolkit with operational guidance, templates, and examples, future plans for a panel-based decision-making process to improve fairness and consistency.

## Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report

The report presented to O&S in **October** set the foundation for a full report due by January 2026, highlighting existing biodiversity actions, including partnerships with community groups, annual planting schemes and best practice reviews, with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy expected in late autumn, and educational materials for staff, volunteers and the public, being developed. Members welcomed the report, and suggested several improvements, including a clearer vision statement, more detail on the 18 volunteer groups, and consideration of food and diet impacts on biodiversity. They also raised questions about Ash dieback and about Local Green Space designation and land leases, which officers committed to follow up.

## Air Quality Update

in **November**, senior officers updated Members on CBC's air quality strategy, covering national context, local measurements, current actions, and future plans, with particular emphasis on the impact of the Air Quality Education post and feedback from DEFRA. Members welcomed the report, especially the schools project, and expressed interest in contributing to the new Air Quality Strategy and smoke control zone review. Officers addressed questions on particulate matter (PM2.5), monitoring limitations, pollution sources, and idling vehicles, and said that overall, the strategy prioritises education and awareness over enforcement, with Members and officers aligned on its importance and effectiveness.



## Understanding Barriers to Affordable Housing Delivery

In **Novem**Page 116 outlined the current challenges and opportunities in Cheltenham's housing, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. CBC and housing associations remain committed to exceeding market delivery rates, with a current policy requirement of 35–40% affordable housing in new developments, with progress being made on the Strategic and Local Plan, Affordable Housing Guidance, and First Homes Technical Advice Note. Major sites in North and West Cheltenham could significantly boost delivery. CBC aims to acquire 20–25 homes annually, focusing on larger family properties and in terms of town centre regeneration, is working collaboratively to ensure affordable housing is integrated into vibrant urban areas.

Members expressed concern about the frequent failure to meet the 40% affordable housing target due to viability claims, and were reassured that developers' cost claims are independently scrutinised and robustly challenged, and that viability assessments are being updated. Additional concerns about the council purchasing homes at market value while developers profit, and a suggestion about stratifying affordable housing targets based on development size was noted by officers who said that this would require viability testing and regional agreement.

## Devolution/ Local Government Reorganisation

The Leader briefed O&S in **January** on the publication of the government's white paper on devolution and local government reorganisation. She informed that a community governance review would take place to reflect the fact that much of Cheltenham is unparished. Members recognised the key projects CBC was undertaking which required significant resource; reorganisation would also require financial and staffing resource.

## 2025-26 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Budget Proposals

The Chair of Budget Scrutiny Working Group reported in **January** on its scrutiny of the budget proposals, saying that in these difficult times the council's sound budget and relatively healthy position was a great reflection on the Deputy Chief Executive, finance team and council as a whole. Members were reassured by the officer's response to questions regarding employee pensions.

## Temporary Closure of Household Recycling Centre (HRC)

At O&S's request, the Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Realm continued to update Members during the Leader/ Cabinet Member briefing sessions at committee on the temporary closure on 10 **January** 2025 of the HRC. This followed the Cabinet decision in November 2024 which had generated considerable public interest. Detailed data was awaited and the council was working with partners on kerbside collections and disposal options.



## Golden Valley Social Value Strategy

In **January** Page 117, Valley Development team outlined key elements of the emerging Social Value Strategy which was currently in draft form. Further to O&S Members' comments, the team acknowledged concerns about public perception and are working with the communications team to ensure residents across Cheltenham understand the town-wide benefits of the development. Lease arrangements for future tenants will balance long-term stability with flexibility for growing businesses, particularly in the cyber sector.

## Reconciling the challenges of heritage protection with sustainability measures

The Climate, Flooding and Decarbonisation Manager attended O&S in **February** and highlighted the challenges and barriers faced by owners of listed buildings. Members learned how the council was working to balance heritage preservation with the need for energy-efficient retrofitting, especially in listed buildings. Support is being offered through partnerships, community events, and initiatives like Future Fit Homes. A retrofit engagement officer has been appointed, and planning team capacity has been increased. The Council is considering new approaches such as Local Listed Building Consent Orders and continues to seek funding to improve energy efficiency in its own historic properties. National guidance now provides greater flexibility, helping to address retrofit challenges more consistently.

## Interim Collections Development Policy 2025-27

In **March**, the draft interim Collections Policy for The Wilson was brought to committee, ahead of Cabinet consideration and a full review in two years following the completion of the Big Museum Project. Members were briefed on the project which includes extensive community consultation and outreach, aiming to shape the museum's future direction and ensure the collections reflect public input. The interim collections development policy ensures compliance with Arts Council standards and strengthens governance, while laying the groundwork for more ambitious and inclusive collection development.

# Gloucestershire Joint Committees

**Three members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly attend Gloucestershire-wide joint meetings and report back to the committee. Here are summaries of their work and observations across the year**

## Summary of meetings of

### GCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2024-25

Items subject to scrutiny by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee were as follows:

#### 1. Maternity Services Update

The update included information on the temporary changes to the provision of post-natal beds at Stroud Maternity Hospital and the closure of the Aveta Birthing Unit at Cheltenham General. It confirmed that the current problematic midwifery staffing position was likely to remain in place until the end of the current calendar year.

#### 2. General Practice in Gloucestershire – An Update on Access

In February 2024 Gloucestershire provided a total of 388,618 appointments to a population of 689,422. It ranked third of all South-West region Integrated Care Boards by providing 2,734 appointments per 100,000 patients, (higher than the national figure of 2,357 appointments). It provided 2,008 appointments per 100,000 patients within 14 days, ranking fourth within the region and above the national average. It provided 68.6% of its appointments face-to-face, ranking it second within the region but it ranked second lowest in the provision of telephone calls.

#### 3. Cancer Briefing

15 years ago GHNHSFT was able to hit most Cancer Waiting Times (CWTs) on a regular basis. The 62-day wait from referral to first definitive treatment was occasionally missed though performance would always be close to the 85% target unlike the current disappointing figure of 62%.

The essential problem is that resources have failed to get close to meeting the increase in demand (i.e. the number of people with cancer that is treatable) and the wider range of treatment options now available (i.e. the number of potential treatments available to any one patient).

#### 4. Update from South West Ambulance Service NHSFT

The biggest challenge for the Ambulance Trust across the South West has been the increased length of time spent at acute hospitals waiting to handover patients. In the month of June, SWAST lost 3,298 hours to handover delays at Gloucester Royal Hospital and Cheltenham General Hospital, severely reducing the remaining resource hours on the road to respond to patients (9,739 hours lost across the last three months in total). Average handover time at Gloucester Royal Hospital in June was 1 hour 24 minutes per patient and 25 minutes per patient at Cheltenham General Hospital compared to the 15-minute handover standard.

Some of the rural response times were well below the mean in terms of call answering. Over the past 18 months performance has consistently been better than the national standard.

## **5. Gloucestershire Urgent and Emergency Care Winter Assurance Plan**

Prevention and early intervention were stated as the main aim of this plan. The report highlights many community based initiatives to prevent this but it is thin on reassurance that capacity at the acute hospitals will have the flexibility to cope adequately with the inevitable substantial increase in demand that it will experience.

## **6. Update on Gloucestershire CC Motion 935 – Cancer Waiting Times**

HOSC members recently visited the Regional Oncology Centre at Cheltenham General Hospital. It was an excellent opportunity not just to see the fantastic treatment facilities but also to discuss with Consultant medical staff, nurses and hospital managers the issues and problems they faced. We learnt that the failure to meet the 62-day wait target was primarily a diagnostic and surgical problem not an Oncology one. In Oncology there are fortunately still no delays for urgent treatment. There are currently no problems with many cancer pathways but significant difficulties are occurring in the Urology pathway and also the Lower GI (colorectal) cancer treatment pathway.

## **7. Living Well and Ageing Well in Gloucestershire**

The Committee was presented with a model for dealing with frailty in Gloucestershire. The focus of the model was on keeping these vulnerable patients out of hospital as much as possible. Whilst the assessment/ diagnostic phase may require a brief hospital stay the aim would be to provide personalised care as close to home as possible with 'complex' care at home teams and virtual wards enabling clinical teams to monitor patients remotely.

## **8. Review of NHS Winter Assurance Plan 2024-25**

This plan was presented to HOSC in October 2024 and the report gave an update on how effective the ICB considered it had been in the early part of the winter. Prevention and early intervention were stated as the main aim of this plan.

## **9. Major Ongoing Performance issues:**

- i. Cancer Waiting Times
- ii. Ambulance Waiting Times
- iii. A&E Waiting Times
- iv. Access to NHS Dental Services
- v. Access to Mental Health Services
- vi. Waiting Times for Elective Surgery
- vii. Waiting times for some diagnostic services
- viii. Availability of medical beds in the acute and community hospital settings

**Councillor Adrian Bamford**  
Up Hatherley ward

Page 120

## Summary of meetings of Gloucestershire Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee in 2024-25

Here is a summary of the points discussed:

- It was confirmed that this scrutiny committee would only scrutinise the activity of the City Region Board and was not intended to scrutinise the decisions of the individual district councils.
- Currently preparing to produce a Local Growth Plan. This will be based on the County Council's Economic Strategy.
- GCC will align its strategy with government strategy in certain areas eg housing targets.
- GCC is working with businesses to achieve net zero; this will allow GCC to achieve its target of 2045 with an 80% reduction by 2030.
- An overview of the county population, employment sectors and wellbeing scores for residents was shared.
- Population growth for the county is above national average – led by people moving to the county.
- Almost one in ten 16-64 year olds have no qualifications.
- The devolution application is being considered by GCC ; it is looking at options and what this would look like.
- The group will provide monthly updates to the Economic Officers Group Forum
- As requested, updates will also be provided to Climate Change Gloucestershire, District member briefings and a joint Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
- An Annual Implementation Strategy will be produced each Spring
- There was discussion of the proposed Unitary Authority and will form a new Strategic Authority when this is created
- Aim to finalise a Local Growth Plan in Spring
- Stakeholder engagement events held in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Gloucester to support the creation of the plan

**Councillor Ben Orme**  
Lansdown ward

Page 121  
**Summary of meetings of  
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel  
in 2024-25**

It's been a very tough year for our Gloucestershire police force with significant financial challenges, redundancies, loss of senior staff, suspensions at the highest level and low staff morale. As such, I've been grateful to sit on this panel at a critical time as a critical friend, to provide support and challenge where appropriate, especially when it affects our town. To help support the financial challenges our constabulary are still facing, the panel agreed to raise precepts across the county, to ensure our neighbourhoods can be as safe and supported as we need them to be.

I have been very vocal about numerous policing issues, including speaking up against the dangerous and antisocial behaviour of users on illegal e-bikes and e-scooters, creating fear and havoc across Cheltenham. That said, I am extremely grateful that action has been taking place to educate those who are committing such offences and where necessary taking these vehicles off the road when it has been safe to do so. On my last briefing, the police had successfully removed 20 illegal e-bikes from our streets. I would like to encourage everyone to report incidents of any illegal e-bikes or e-scooters activity to the police; they will take you seriously—just remember the date, time and location.

Unfortunately, drug dealing in our neighbourhoods continues - I have spotted dealings with my own eyes in St Peters on too many occasions. Thankfully, the commissioner has included the fight against drugs in his latest crime prevention plan. If you spot drug dealing on your street or anywhere else, don't think the police don't care, as they have promised they do—report it.

It is devastating to know Gloucestershire has the highest rates of school exclusions and 100% of children exploited by organised crime gangs would have been excluded from school. This is not right, and more support is required at a national level for schools, families and those in supporting roles. I have vocalised my concerns in panel meetings, and I hope more can be done with collaborative working by the police, schools and the county council. Our constabulary do have great programmes like the police cadets, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is helping to promote many crime prevention initiatives for children with local schools.

## Page 122

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is sadly growing and should not be tolerated by anyone—the constabulary know many cases go unreported. This male crime against women and girls also includes harassment, intimidation and abuse both physical and mental, such as coercive control. If you are a victim, please contact the police; support will be available to you, and it is a priority within the commissioner's latest [Police and Crime Prevention Plan](#). In addition, our new Temporary Chief Constable Maggie Blythe is a national lead on VAWG matters, and is also the national VAWG Coordinator for the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC).

I know our police force is ready to fight against the hatred and increase of far-right racism impacting the country and although we've not witnessed a full-on riot in Cheltenham or Gloucestershire, sadly these crimes do take place in our lives, both on our streets and online, and our police officers are ready to act. Hate crime is a crime and should not be tolerated—report it to the police.

As critical friend, representing Cheltenham on Gloucestershire's Police and Crime Panel, I stand up whenever I can to vocalise the concerns of residents. I take this role very seriously to ensure my contributions make a positive impact for our town.

There is much more I could share, as so much has happened during my first year on this panel, but I would like to close saying a big thank you to our police officers and staff who work so hard every day to make our streets and lives safer.

If you'd like to be informed real-time when issues are raised, you can watch our meetings online; they're available on [Gloucestershire County Council's](#) website.

**Cllr Victoria Atherstone**

St Peters ward

Cabinet member for Safety and Communities

# What next?

Two external members have been invited to join the committee in order to offer further objective scrutiny of the items discussed and will become active members in the coming year. All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny are invited twice a year to come together to consider items for the workplan. The wide range of suggestions prioritised and itemised for 2025-26 include:



## Preventative Maintenance on council assets and Community Leased Buildings

To understand the general approach to the planned maintenance of public facilities and the asset management strategy



## Flood Risk Management and Prevention

To understand partnership working to improve flood mitigation in the borough



## Draft Procurement Strategy

To consider the emerging CBC procurement strategy



## Culture Board

To assess the outcomes of the activities and measuring success against original objectives



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy

To consider the annual update and review implementation of the policy



## Youth Engagement

To update O&S on progress being made by No Child Left behind to deliver a year of youth action



## Empty Homes

To evaluate data and measures to encourage putting back in use and respective barriers

# Contacts

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